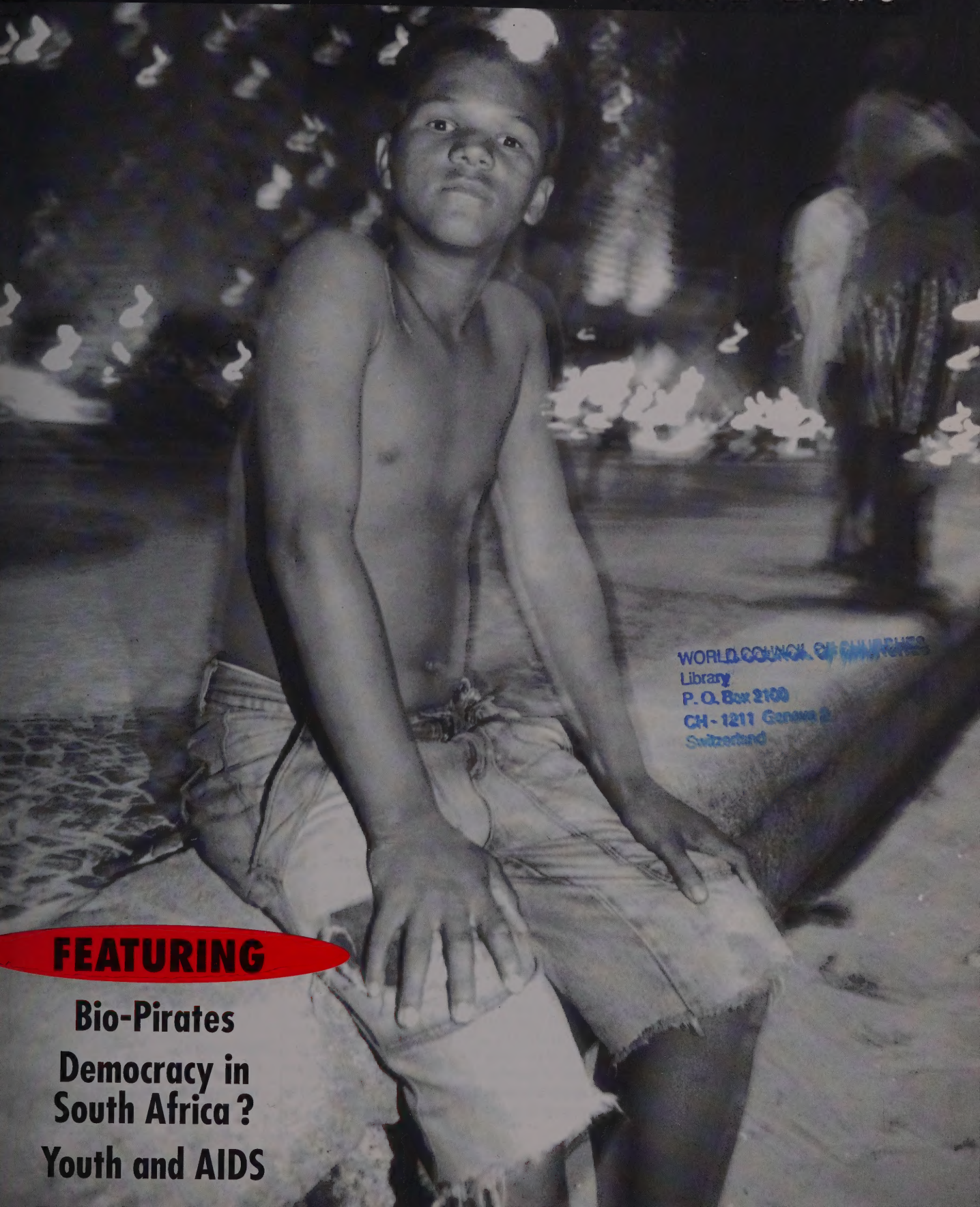
4/1993

ECHOES

justice, peace and creation news



WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
Library
P.O. Box 2100
CH-1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

FEATURING

Bio-Pirates

Democracy in South Africa?

Youth and AIDS

Echoes From Elsewhere

An Introduction To Echoes Magazine In Reactions, Facts and Issues From All Over The World

In Memoriam

The tragic loss of Dr Sjef Theunis, the Secretary-General of El Taller on 24 May, 1993, at his home in Tunis, as a result of a heart attack, has no doubt left an empty space in many people's lives. It was not only a loss for his immediate family and those working with him at El Taller, but also for the whole NGDO movement in the world.

WHY CHILE?

When the time came for Sjef to receive the last rites at the "Charles Nicolle" Hospital of Tunis, a Belgian priest was summoned for this most painful ceremony. Knowing neither the man nor his family, he made a few general statements about "the exemplary life spent by the deceased at the service of development and the third world". Then, as he was leaving the hospital morgue, in an attempt to relieve our pain, he asked me what Sjef did in life.

- He was the founder of a non-governmental organisation aimed at the permanent training of, and dialogue between the different parties involved in development, I briefly explained.
- How sad to die while visiting abroad, he said with regret.
- No, no. You don't understand, I said, Monsieur Theunis set up El Taller in Tunis more than a year ago.

The priest, looking surprised, said

- Oh, to train Tunisians!
- Not only Tunisians. El Taller holds seminars in all four corners of the world. In fact, the name of the association is Spanish.
- Why Spanish? the priest asked unbelievingly.
- Because the founding assembly was in Santiago, Chile, in November, 1991.
- Oh, he said, trying desperately to understand, El Taller was first founded in Chile?
- No, no, in Reus, in Spain, in 1989.
- Oh, he exclaimed, furrowing his brow, but why a founding in Chile, of all places?
- Why not, in fact it was at that assembly we decided on the move to Tunis...

At this moment the priest, having totally lost track of the conversation, decided to change the subject. As for me, I felt a certain feeling of pride overwhelm me. Sjef had abolished the borders and, with fanfare, shown us that travelling around the world is essential for those who wish to understand it. And understanding the meaning of their own life.

Xavier Zeebroek
Chief Editor, Banyan
Reproduced from El Taller's Newsletter
BANYAN vol 3. No. 3

EL TALLER
B.P. 137
1002 Tunis
Belvédère
Tunisia

EL TALLER

EarthAction Network

A Network Linking Citizen Groups Around the World in Action for the Earth

The EarthAction Network was launched at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in June 1992, by a group of citizen activists from all continents. It provides a concrete way for members of citizens' groups around the world to act together to

° protect our oceans, lands and atmosphere, and preserve the Earth's biological diversity
° ensure that everyone has access to food, shelter, education, family planning and health care
° prevent war and stop production of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons by all nations
° strengthen the UN and other world institutions to help keep the peace, protect the environment and promote human rights and democracy.

Consider joining the EarthAction Network. Here is what will happen:

Each month, your organisation receives an EarthAction Alert focused on one concrete issue or proposal that is on the international agenda. The Alert gives your members all the information they need to send a brief, hard-hitting message to a key decision-maker — usually someone in their own national leadership, sometimes the head of a corporation or an international figure.

In every three month period, you will receive one action alert on environment or population issues, one on development, and one on peace and international security.

Your organisation agrees to do its best to distribute to its activist members at least four of the twelve EarthAction Alerts each year, in whatever form you wish. The alert is simply a recommendation: you can adapt or re-write it in any way, to best reflet your local situation and your organisation's agenda. You don't even have to mention the name of EarthAction.

EarthAction's service is supplied free of charge to citizens' groups in Southern and Eastern countries. Other groups are asked to contribute up to a limit of $500 dollars.

To join, or for more information, write to EarthAction Network, 26 Blvd Louis Schmidt, 1040 Brussels, Belgium, Tel: (32-2) 736 8052; Fax: (32-2) 733 9767; email: gn:earthaction.

EarthAction is not a formal coalition and does not speak on behalf of the partner organisations. Its function is to recommend action alerts on issues which are on the international agenda. partner organisations have complete control over the content of the alerts which go to their members.

Table of Contents

Bio-Pirates	4
Land Rights in Australia	7
South African Elections	8
Lay Training Centres	10
Lay People	12
Sri Lankan Refugees	16
Standing Up for Peace	19
Faith and Order	20
Global Education	23
UNCED - What Next?	25
Sustainable Growth	27
HIV/AIDS	28
Publications	31

A Steward Application Form is situated in the centre of the magazine.

E d i t o r i a l

Echoes
justice, peace and creation news

Echoes is an occasional publication of the World Council of Churches' Programme Unit III on Justice, Peace and Creation.
It is intended to share information and insights on the concerns of the former WCC sub-units, now in a restructured form in the WCC.
This journal replaces: "Women in a changing world", "Youth", "CCPD: for a change", "Link", "Church and Society Newsletter" and "Forum".

Publisher:
The Executive Director of Unit III

Publications Staff Team:
Susie Kankolongo
Elizabeth Salter
Bob Scott

Layout and Design:
Edwin Hassink, WCC

Printed on environmentally friendly paper by the PrintShop of the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva

Coverphoto: Streetchild in Copacabana, Brazil
Peter Williams, WCC

Articles for future publications are welcome.

Unless otherwise specified, articles in Echoes may be freely used, with appropriate acknowledgement.

All correspondence and inquiries should be directed to:

Programme Unit III
Publications
World Council of Churches
P.O.Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland

Telephone: 022 - 791 61 11
Telefax: 022 - 791 03 61
Telex: 415 730 OIK CH
Cable: OIKOUMENE GENEVA

It is only a few months since I have assumed my post as director of Unit III. For me it is a privilege to join a team of people working on programmes which are at the heart of the vision of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

The world we live in is constantly oscillating between the extremes of hope and despair. This creates for us new frontiers and new grounds for interpreting and exercising our Christian vocation. It is in this ever changing environment (not necessarily or exclusively for the better or for the worse) that our Lord summons us once more to be co-workers with him in attaining fullness of life for all.

At the heart of our global consciousness is not just the common attributes of our faith but our common quest for truth and the establishment of a new just order in our world. I am not speaking about the so-called "New World Order" but about a "New Orderly World". A world in which we are all restored to the image and likeness of our Creator and in which the dignity of God's creation is respected and renewed. A world in which the institutional bureaucracies, especially within the church, do not become a hindrance to God's grace but are transformed into avenues of service for the sake of God's realm.

Our global consciousness as the people of God sublimates all political and cultural confinements that tend to alienate us, not only from each other, but also from God. Racism, ethnocentrism and fanaticism are social evils which oppress and frustrate our genuine desire for unity in God's realm. Sometimes, even extreme forms of nationalism can impede our quest for unity in the church. However, this does not mean that we lose our particular identities within the contexts that we practice our faith. Neither does it mean that there is any conflict between the universality of the realm of God and the peculiarity of it within particular socio-political contexts. In fact the contextual presence of the church is a source of enrichment, maturity and authenticity of our shared faith.

We can only stand in awe of the vast range of issues and crises that we have to tackle, in the name of that shared faith and with the energy that can only come from working together.

Those who read this magazine, co-workers in this struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, are part of a great world-wide family, accountable to each other, inspiring each other and important to each other.

Sam Kobia

Rev. Dr Sam Kobia, joined the Unit III in August of 1993. He has replaced Mr Oh Jae-Shik in quality of Executive Director. He is from Kenya and is an ordained minister in the Methodist Church in Kenya. He and his wife Ruth have two daughters and two sons.

After gaining a diploma in Theology at the St Paul's United Theological College in Kenya, he went on to study for a diploma in Urban Ministry from MacCormick Theological Seminary, USA and continued his studies in City Regional Planning at the Massachussetts Institute of Technology, obtaining a Masters degree in 1978.

Sam first worked as Urban Industrial Mission Secretary with the Christian council of Ghana, participating in a team of urban planners, sociologists and theologians.

In 1974 he was appointed Industrial Adviser, National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), organising seminars and workshops for workers and supervisors in commerce and industry, and planning urban industrial mission courses for theological students.

From 1978 to 1984, Sam was the Executive Secretary, Urban Rural Mission, WCC, in Geneva. In addition, he was secretary of the Africa Task Force.

In 1985 he returned to Kenya to become Coordinator/Director of the Church Development Activities with the NCCK, advising NCCK member churches on the formulation, implementation, management and evaluation of development projects. He coordinated NCCK programmes to maximise utilisation of resources, and organised courses and seminars.

In September 1987 Sam was appointed General Secretary, NCCK, providing leadership, guidance and supervising the overall coordination of the Council's work. He built and sustained ecumenical and public relationships locally and overseas.

Sam published a number of papers and articles, and has special interests in the political economy of urbanisation in Africa, theological interpretation of power and governance, peace initiatives and human rights, democracy and social justice.

Pat Roy Mooney

BIO-PIRATES PATENT INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE ... AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TOO

When Aklilu Lemma was brought to the University of Toledo to pick up an honorary doctoral degree, the Ethiopian scientist was wined and dinned the night before by the University's president and faculty. It was over dinner that Lemma described his research with E44 — a particularly potent strain of endod (the African soapberry plant) and its remarkable capacity to thwart schistosomiasis — one of the major parasitic diseases afflicting children throughout the tropics. For centuries, innovative Ethiopian women had nurtured endod as a laundry detergent and shampoo. In water, the endod strain kills the snails that harbour the parasite that weakens people using the water. Lemma and other Ethiopian scientists had crusaded, with little response, trying to convince northern institutes to devote the time and money necessary to develop endod as a prevention to one of the world's major scourges. Lemma's dinner guests were properly horrified by the failure of western science to appreciate informal innovation in the South. They also wondered if endod might kill zebra mussels — a scourge not of children but of industry and shipping on the Great Lakes...

Back at his hotel, Lemma sat with Toledo scientists and wrote out an experiment to pit endod against the unwanted mussel interlopers from Asia. By the time he received his degree the next day, Lemma knew his experiment had worked.

That was on June 15th, 1990. Exactly four months later, on October 15th, 1990, the University of Toledo filed a patent application on the use of endod to kill zebra mussels. The patent is still pending — and so is the estimated $5 billion market awaiting its use on North American waters. The Toledo campus is reported to have at least one major chemical company lined up to commercialize the product. Meanwhile, Aklilu Lemma is back in Africa working for UNICEF and endod's true discoverer, the women of Ethiopia, continue their lonely war against schistosomiasis.

Sally Fox of Fox Fibres, on the other had, has her patent already. Not for Ethiopian endod but for Andean cotton. She came across the unusual cotton seeds in a gene bank in Riverside, California eleven years ago. What was unique about these seeds was that they were coloured — hues of greens and browns and something bordering on blue. As an inveterate weaver, Fox found the staple length too short for machine weaving so the enterprising entomologist determined to breed longer strains. "I didn't invent them," Sally Fox admits, "They're native to the Americas and were grown 4,000 years ago." This year, with tags proclaiming that the cottons are "from the ancient peoples of the Andes", Levi Strauss "Naturals" brand will appear on the backsides of 600,000 natural cotton coloured jeans. Regardless of who the real inventors were, the patents and profits will not be found in the Andes. In fact, it has become illegal to grow the traditional varieties in Bolivia — ostensibly because of pest problems. Where is Sally Fox, entomologist, when farmers really need her?

Then there is Margosan-O, the patented form of Asia's Neem tree now the exclusive monopoly of W.R. Grace chemical company. Billed as an organic insecticide new to U.S. farmers, it is hardly new to farmers and medicinalists from East Africa to the Western Pacific who

have availed themselves of the Neem tree's potent compounds for centuries. On the pharmaceutical front, CPT11, a new drug developed in Japan from an Indian plant called "camptothescin" is under patent and under clinical trial in the U.S.. The medicinal plant seems to have a knack for preventing cancerous cells from multiplying.

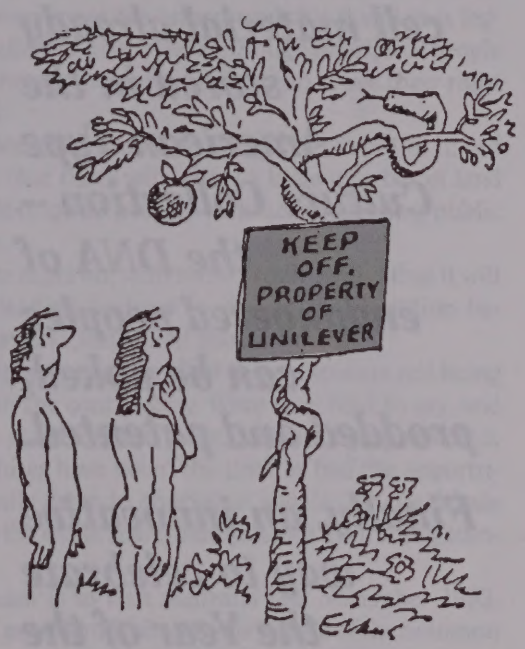
For food processors, there is also Lucky Biotech's patent application (together with the University of California) for thaumatin and the serendipity plant — both prodigious sweeteners long-used in West Africa. Thaumatin weighs in at 100,000 times the sweetness of cane sugar. The patent, if granted, would prohibit some uses of the plant not merely in Europe and North America but also in the countries that discovered and nurtured it.

These patents are all examples of what the South has come to call "klepto-monopoly" or "Bio-Piracy". Recent patent court decisions and a growing trend toward the patenting of any and all life forms has exposed the vast biological and genetic diversity of the South's flora and fauna to the prey of patent lawyers. According to some participants in last year's Earth Summit, "You no longer need intellectual capacity in order to obtain intellectual property — all you need is a visa." New interpretations of patent law — laws originally designed to protect light bulbs and sewing machines — are now being loosely applied to tulip bulbs, rice and even bits and pieces of the human brain. Traditional requirements for patent applicants to prove that they have made an "inventive step" and not merely "discovered" something — and to show that their invention offers society something "useful" are now slipping into history as the booming new biotech industry fights for market power.

As the patents for endod, coloured cotton and the serendipity plant show, however, the biotech industry is not merely slapping patents on "wild" nature but also on the past and present inventions of informal innovators including indigenous peoples. The argument for allowing this is essentially racist: inventions are only patentable if they are submitted by lawyers and backed by scientists in white lab coats. Inventions must conform to western standards. Indigenous peoples have arts and crafts and folklore, biotech companies have science — and lawyers.

The much-touted Merck/Costa Rica bio-diversity deal shows the unequal relationship. Merck has not only — for $1 million — won access to a botanical treasure trove, it has also managed to convince the world that it is "training" the very people who know this bio-diversity best — the indigenous experts — as part of a transfer of technology arrangement. In fact, it is simply taking the knowledge along with the plants. Costa Rica is estimated to hold 5% of the world's bio-diversity. If the Merck deal were replicated for the rest of the South's bio-diversity, the whole kit and caboodle would sell for $20 million. Merck's sales in 1991 were at $8.6 billion while Costa Rica's entire Gross National Product that year was less than $5.2 billion. Merck's research budget in 1991 was roughly $1 billion and it is not likely that the Costa Rican deal represented more than a fraction of a percent of its advertising budget. At present, Merck has three drugs on the market with a sales volume in excess of $1 billion each. Given that Merck invests an average of $125 million on research for each new drug, the discovery charge for one single new drug arising from the Costa Rican adventure is barely loose change for Merck. If ten or twenty years down the road, Merck and Costa Rica dispute the origins of a plant-derived active ingredient (after all, was it from Nicaragua or from Costa Rica?) the country's capacity to appeal to the international courts to resolve such a dispute are close to nil. Anyway, Merck has more lawyers in its stable than can be found in all of Costa Rica.

Some observers argue that, within the next two decades, the annual retail market for Amazonian nuts, oils, herbs and flowers could reach $15 billion. This could pay local communities $1 billion a year in sales and royalties1. By extrapolation then, the retail market for Costa Rica's bio-diversity would hardly be less than $1 billion and its corresponding annual return to the country should not be less than $60 million. Unless, of course, Merck has all the value locked up outside the country.



Hope of protecting the intellectual integrity of indigenous peoples faded last year when the U.S. National Institute of Health (NIH), and the British Medical Council claimed monopoly over several thousand genes and DNA fragments related to the human brain. Uniquely, the applications were for "discoveries" (not "inventions") and the claimants did not explain the "usefulness" of their discoveries. The NIH contrived that it has developed a computerized system that allows it to isolate genetic mater-

ial and then do what telephone companies invite with their Yellow Pages — "let their fingers do the walking" through a computer search to determine if others have identified the same genes. If not, the NIH slaps a patent on the material. As the U.S. has demanded in trade, this "levels the playing field". Intellectual property needs no longer be subsidized by intelligence. The NIH assembly line is tantamount to inviting Leeuwenhoek to patent everything he saw with his microscope that had not been seen before.

– like other human cell material already stored in the American Type Culture Collection – the DNA of endangered peoples can be poked, prodded and patented.

Finally, an innovative way to celebrate the Year of the Indigenous Peoples.

The Great Brain Robbery has even greater implications for biological diversity. Everything in farmers' fields or in the rainforest could be up for patenting. Patent aspirants need only a visa in order to lay claim to vast quantities of plants and animals bred and nurtured by rural communities. The Wall Street Journal reported that the NIH action was leading to a breakdown in the Human Genome Project and that breeders had observed problems in scientific exchange in rice and maize[2]. The Economist likened the claims to drift-net patenting[3].

By late 1992, the NIH had laid claim to 2,851 DNA sequences. The patent application is an astonishing 1,015 pages long. Further, the NIH has deposited all the sequenced fragments in the American Type Culture Collection. A senior executive at Genzyme Corp estimates that the cost to U.S. taxpayers is in excess of $1.7 million in ATCC deposit fees. U.S. patent examiners complain that it could take them until 2035 to process the claim.

The drive to establish exclusive monopolies over life has still other dimensions: Agracetus, a subsidiary of W.R. Grace (the Neem tree patent holder) has won a patent for genetically-modified cotton that the U.S. Patent and Trademarks Office says, gives it a monopoly over all forms of genetically engineered cotton. This multi-billion dollar Third World crop is now closed to scientific innovation in the South — unless the South can pay the licensing fees — and even then, only if W.R. Grace is willing to sell licenses. Effectively, Grace has patented a whole species and the only remaining battle to be fought will be between W.R. Grace and Levi Strauss.

But if Grace and Strauss are after the knowledge of indigenous peoples, the NIH has much loftier goals. They are after the people themselves. In a sub-programme of the Human Genome Project called the Human Genome Diversity Project, the NIH and other international institutions are bankrolling a drive to collect the hair roots, blood samples and cheek scrapings of 15,000 indigenous persons in 722 distinct communities around the world. Known scientifically as I.H.Is, these "Isolates of Historic Interest" will be cryogenically "immortalized" in the American Type Culture Collection in Maryland where — like other human cell material already stored there — the DNA of endangered peoples can be poked, prodded and patented. Finally, an innovative way to celebrate the Year of the Indigenous Peoples.

But the ultimate genius lies in "ATCC CRL-10598" — the remnants of "a 26-year-old female Guaymi Indian patient in Panama" whose cell line is now the subject of a world patent claim (WO 9208784 A1). The holder of the claim is Ron Brown, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce who — with trade Rep. Mickie Cantor — is responsible for GATT negotiations. It is at GATT that the United States is demanding global acquiescence to the patenting of all forms of life. The U.S. Commerce Department's world patent application was published exactly one week after the U.S. succeeded in keeping cell libraries and gene banks outside the final text of the Bio-diversity Convention and short days before the Rio Earth Summit adopted the Treaty. While the Summit took every opportunity to extol the virtues of indigenous knowledge, the U.S. was patenting indigenous people.

Outside the main entrance to the Department of Commerce in Washington D.C., stands a plaque with an inscription from Abraham Lincoln, "The patent system added the fuel of interest to the fire of genius". One hundred and thirty years later, would Lincoln still be a patent booster ... or would he be back at work freeing its slaves?

Pat Roy Mooney works for the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI) in Ottawa, Canada.

Notes

1. Eugene Linden, "Lost tribes, lost knowledge" Time p. 46 (7) September 23, 1991.

2. Michael Waldholz and Hilary Stout, "Right to Life: A New Debate Rages Over the Patenting of Gene Discoveries - US Claim to Broad Chunks of the Human 'Genome' Draws Fire From Some - The Very Basis of Biotech", The Wall Street Journal, April 17, 1992.

3. "Obviously not: intellectual property" (biotechnology patents), Economist, v325 p. 90 (2) Oct, 3, 1992.

SOVEREIGNTY AND LAND RIGHTS IN AUSTRALIA

When the first white settlers arrived in Australia they regarded the land as being empty, even though they saw many native people, whom they did not regard as human beings and who, in subsequent years, they slaughtered in large numbers.

The official policy of 'empty land' (or "Terra Nullius") was not denied, even though some states had included recognition of Aboriginal ownership of land in their legislation.

But a recent High Court decision, affecting one Indigenous (Torres Strait Island) family, called Mabo, has effectively established, in the courts, recognition of Aboriginal occupation before the settlers and therefore the legitimacy of native land title. This has caused huge public controversy, with the expected range of opinion from the extreme right-wing racist to liberal and supportive.

Unfortunately the High Court decision only allows Aboriginal title to and specific piece of land if

° they can prove continuous and traditional use of that land; and

° if their traditional right to it has not been extinguished by some later lease or grant.

This effectively means that there is indeed not much land that the Aboriginal people can claim under this new decision. But it is nevertheless enormously symbolic because:

° it finally ends the lie of 'terra nullius';

° the courts have effectively offered themselves as the source of justice and decision for any land claims.

° Aboriginal people now have established, in the eyes of the Whites, their link to the land.

Of course there were many areas of land, some huge tracts, which were granted to white settlers under very suspect leases. However, in the wake of the High Court decision, the government has announced that it will pass legislation to validate all such leases; though Aboriginal people can still claim compensation if they can prove their right to that land.

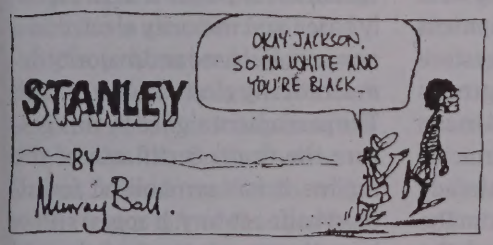
So the Aboriginal people do not get much out of it; but it is certain that there will follow a large number of land claims by Aboriginal people, with accompanying public controversy.

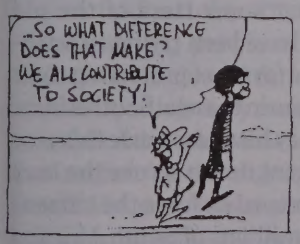
The debate rages on, with some people saying that it will get worse, leading perhaps to violent confrontation between Whites and Aboriginal people.

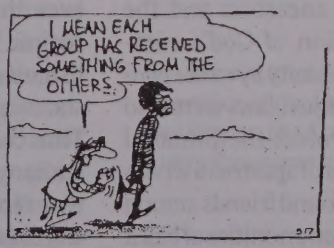
The Aboriginal people say that their voices are not being listened to in the controversy. What they have to say, and their future plans for land claims, are not being reported. Very few Whites have taken the time or had the opportunity to actually listen to Aboriginal people – so the debate is fuelled by the white scare-mongers and the mining companies.

A WCC team is to visit Australia late November 1993. Led by WCC president Bishop Leslie Boseto of the Solomon Islands, its specific task is to visit Aboriginal communities and hear their views. They will report to the next WCC Central Committee meeting in January and their report will be shared with all WCC member churches.

Bob Scott, Programme Unit III, WCC







Daniel Ntoni-Nzinga

FORCED OUT IN 1970 AND LEFT OUT IN 1993

The worrying future of the 10 million South Africans in the so-called "homelands" today

1993 will certainly be remembered as a year of dramatic changes in the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa. Twenty years ago, Africa and the entire world witnessed to events that laid down some of the stumbling blocks which still challenge, if not undermine, the changes that have been taking place in South Africa since February 1990. "For the white South Africans, 1970 was a dramatic year, with considerable losses and gains; for black South Africans it was a year of little change which brought only more hardships and greater frustrations that found expression in the growing phenomenon of Black Power as a rival force to the more traditional African aspiration of multi-racialism." (Africa Year Book 1970, page B489). This outstanding analysis of the changes of the 1970s which were initiated by, and for the sole protection of, the apartheid regime still sounds accurate for the millions of black South Africans who were forced out of the Republic of South Africa in 1970 and are now left out by the constitutional arrangements recently agreed upon at Kempton Park, which have now been approved by parliament.

It is obvious that when parliament passed laws that regulated the establishment of the Bantustans and subsequent homelands, which it said was the only best means to further the development of all South Africans and "restore the dignity of the ethnic groups that constitute the South African Nation", the apartheid regime intended to legitimise the already forced removal of Blacks from the lands of their ancestors and the misappropriation of God's common gift to humanity by white people only. The unjust laws were also intended to protect the immoral political system of apartheid which unfortunately found friends among the oppressed communities of black South Africans, who finally implemented them at the expense of the dignity and true independence of their own people. Despite protests from people of all the sides of the South African political scene and by the international community, the regime established the so-called homelands, some of which are said to be independent states today.

The liberation struggle in South Africa has now reached its most important phase especially after the Negotiating Council forced the very parliament which decreed unjust laws to sustain and protect the immoral system of apartheid, to pass the legislation regulating the transition of power from a racially based and minority elected to a non racially based and majority democratically elected government. The parliament signed by this gesture the death certificate of the regime it has symbolised for almost half a century. It appears however that supporters of the old regime have been trying to establish new forms of protecting their status quo in the new South Africa. Thus they have also made this very parliament not to revoke the laws that removed by force the citizenship of millions of South Africans to become citizens of second class based in the so-called homelands

which are no more than the reserves of labour forces for the white South Africans. This means that although we welcome the courage of the deputies who have now come to sense with reality in the South African politics, we regret profoundly their inability to ensure that all South Africans benefit from the current transitional process.

Like in the seventies, 1993 appears to be a dramatic year of considerable losses and gains. For white South Africans, the constitutional arrangements recently approved in parliament still give them prospects for a more sophisticated control over the new political system even while in the back seat. For millions of black South Africans, who have been left out of the current constitutional arrangement, the adopted bill only regulates the political participation of those who have not been classified as "citizens of the labour reserves". In other words, the process towards democracy and the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council, seem to be reinforcing the greater frustrations of the seventies with the prospect of more hardships and the subsequent destruction of many lives, including that of their own communities.

It should be said that we all know the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa where black people have always aspired to dignified life in a multi-racial society.

Little is however known about any historical struggle of Black Communities for racially based nation states like Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Transkei and Venda, which are in fact a gift of the apartheid regime to divert the attention of the struggling people of South Africa from their real demands of a just and participatory society constructed on the values that accorded due respect to the dignity of all South Africans. This aspiration is still far from being achieved as the inhabitants of the so-called homelands are excluded from the legislation that regulates the current transitional process towards democracy. The tragedy is that parliament refuses to take responsibilities and scrap the legislation it passed twenty years ago, which implies that it wants to frustrate the liberation struggle and protect the remnants of its unjust achievements from the ultimate aspirations of the black people. Unless the leaders of those homelands consider the lives of their communities more important than their actual positions, the envisaged government of National Unity to be formed after the first multi-racial elections will be caught in a power struggle which will easily undermine its ability to deliver its electoral promises, frustrating thus the aspirations of the people and creating conditions for more unnecessary hardships for its own electorate who have always been at the receiving end of both the colonial and apartheid regimes.

Daniel Ntoni-Nzinga is a staff member of the Unit III, presently working on the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme in South Africa (EMPSA).

The liberation struggle in South Africa has now reached its most important phase especially after the Negotiating Council forced the very parliament which decreed unjust laws to sustain and protect the immoral system of apartheid, to pass the legislation regulating the transition of power from a racially based and minority elected to a non racially based and majority democratically elected government.

photos by empsa south africa

World Convention

Christian Lay Centres and Movements

Following the recent World Convention of Christian Lay Centres and Movements, held in Montreat, North Carolina, USA, ECHOES interviewed one of the participants, the Rev Jonah M. Katoneene, executive secretary of the Association of Christian Lay Centres in Africa.

Echoes: What is a Lay Training Centre?

JK: Its a good question because it raises the issue of what is the self-understanding of the mission of the lay centres. A lay training centre is a meeting place for study, research, dialogue and reflection and a place for retreat; a place where reflection on the issues, be they religious, social, political, or even economic, takes place.

Echoes: Does it exclude clergy?

Not at all. That is why I referred to it as a meeting place. In the new understanding of the laity concept we are now talking of laos. Actually the original meaning of laity in Greek, laos, means "all the people of God". Because it is called a lay training centre does not mean that it excludes the clergy, because they are part of the people of God. The concept of laity means that it addresses the whole spectrum of life. It will deal with matters of faith, social and economic realities, and matters of justice and peace.

Echoes: are they on the cutting edge of the issues?

There are some who are on the cutting edge; those are centres that have programmes that challenge the structures of church and society. But it is also true that there are centres that have a conservative concept of a lay centre; especially those who see their task as training people who are non-clergy to be assistants of the clergy. In that situation there is a demarcation between lay and ministerial training and a concentration on programmes like catechism and evangelism, in their narrow sense. And when we raise issues of justice and peace and the environment with them it is seen to be foreign. This is the case especially in some of the centres in Africa.

So I can say yes and no to your question.

Echoes: Does that create a tension within the ecumenical network of lay centres?

Yes, because it also has something to do with the reality of the whole ecumenical movement. Just as within the ecumenical movement there is sometimes a tension between conservative churches and progressive churches, there is also a tension between conservative lay centres and those which want to go out into the society and transform it; to be instruments of change.

They reflect the churches because, most of our lay training centres especially in Africa, are instruments or organs of churches; and they carry out the programmes for the churches. In fact in my own case in Africa, there is a growing positive tension between the lay training centres which would like to transform themselves into instruments of social change in so-

Delegates to the World Convention of Christian Lay Training Centres and Movements.

ciety and their church hierarchies. Quite often in our courses and encounters people ask why we do not have courses for the moderators and the bishops.

Echoes: One of the debates that goes in society generally is how the church can make itself more relevant to what is going on in that society. Would you say that is what the lay training centres are helping the church to do?

Yes, we are looking at the lay training centres as tools and as organs of the churches to enable them to be transformed to be relevant to the concerns of the society. They have a unique role because they are the meeting places of study and reflection, and so centres are better placed than any other instrument of the church to provide space for the churches, for example, to reflect on the structures of injustice, of human destruction and debt and so on.

There is also the question of leadership. One of the problems that face the churches is promoting a leadership with an ecumenical vision. In many places there is a leadership crisis because the ecumenical vision seems to have been hijacked by institutionalisation. The original vision seems to be on the periphery.

Echoes: How much is the lay centre movement linked up with the theme of JPIC?

We think that JPIC is central to the work of the lay training centres, because they deal with the concerns of everyday life, which are justice and peace, the environmental destruction, of unemployment, hunger, debt.

Therefore lay centres, if they are going to be relevant to the life of the people have no choice but to take JPIC issues as their central agenda.

Actually when the WCC was restructuring our initial aim was to be in unit III which deals with JPIC because that is where we have our natural partners.

Echoes: You recently had the first world convention of Christian lay centres and movements in Montreat, North Carolina. What is the result of that?

It was a very productive event. The major important result was the affirmation that the laity question has been brought again into the centre of the ecumenical movement. I don't want to go into the history of the laity concept but a reading of the history of laity concerns in the ecumenical movement reveals that the laity concept was a key one. But somewhere along the line it disappeared. At Montreat we have reaffirmed that this concept has come back to the ecumenical movement. We were happy that this was confirmed by the general secretary of the WCC, Dr Konrad Raiser and that now we have within the WCC a stream under the title 'Lay Participation towards the Inclusive Community'. This stream will now receive many recommendations from the Montreat convention. One of them is to ensure that there is a continuation of the laity issue within the wider circles of the ecumenical movement.

The most important thing is that we have been brought back into the fold of the ecumenical movement.

Echoes: What is the World Collaboration Committee?

It is a network of lay training centres through their regional associations. It brings together lay centres in Africa, Asia, Europe, Caribbean and North America, because the chairperson and secretary of each regional association is on the Committee. It is coordinated by the staff responsible for the laity desk within the WCC. This has been the case since the World Collaboration Committee came into being in 1972 in Crete. And staff of the laity desk, like Ralph Young, Carlos Sintado, Tosh Arai and now Evelyn Appiah, have coordinated that work. So the Committee has a strong link, in fact is part and parcel of the structure of the WCC. In Montreat we affirmed this link and want it to be maintained.

Towards a New Definition of the Profile

Laity in the Ecumenical Movement

Rev Dr Konrad Raiser

The disappearance of an important ecumenical concept

The "laity" have almost disappeared from ecumenical discussion nowadays. This is all the more striking in that, only a generation ago, "laity" was an ecumenical keyword. Since then the passionate enthusiasm of the early ecumenical movement —which, at least in some most important respects, saw itself as a lay movement — has somewhat abated. What became of the "laity"? What caused the remarkable disappearance of this key ecumenical concept?

First was the inevitable process of institutionalization, and with it the diversification of the ecumenical movement. As a result of institutionalization, many ecumenical initiatives at local, national, regional and international level, which originally depended on the commitment of lay people, have now been incorporated into permanent church structures. Linked to this was an increasing professionalization of ecumenical work, with many of the posts in the newly created offices, departments and ecumenical bodies being filled by specialists with a theological training — in many cases ordained men and women. At the same time, a process of diversification took place, as a result of which the collective term "laity" was broken up into different groups each with their own special interests and profile. The most important instance of this is the emergence of an independent women's movement which of course covers more than half the field of the earlier laity movement.

On closer consideration, however, it becomes clear that the laity have been the "victims" of a decisive change of perspective which has taken place in the ecumenical discussion since the second half of the sixties. This involved a shift away from the viewpoint of the churches and societies of Europe and North America, which had been predominant until then, to focus on the realities of life and the struggles of the churches and peoples of the South. This had a two-fold effect on the profile of the laity. Whereas the framework for the commitment of Christian lay people in their respective social contexts had until then been set by the notion of the "responsible society", the main emphasis of ecumenical concern now became participation in the struggle for justice and freedom of the poor, the marginalized and socially degraded. The commitment to fundamental social change became more important than the question of the church's presence in social structures or efforts for church renewal.

As a counter-move to the emergence of this "secular ecumenism" — and not least because of the active involvement of the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches — the ecumenical movement became markedly more ecclesiastical in character. This shift can be seen most clearly in the discussion on church ministries. In the sixties and early seventies this discussion was still influenced by the rediscovery of the "ministry of the laity" among the many different ministries and offices in the church, and was therefore also concerned with the renewal of all church ministries. With the Lima text on ministry, however, if not before, the discussion came to focus almost exclusively on the understanding and mutual recognition of the ordained ministry. Logically enough this discussion lead into the key ecumenical question of ecclesiology. Nonethless, it clearly demonstrates the "churchifying" of the ecumenical movement which is in danger of finding itself far removed from the real life and questions of faith that concern the majority of lay people.

In the earlier phase the emphasis was on the rediscovery of the laity as mature members of the people of God. In the mid-50s many texts assume a clear distinction between "church" and "world". The old synthesis of the *corpus christianum* has been dissolved by the process of secularization.

The laity, as distinct from the clergy or full-time church workers, are understood as the church's representatives in the secular world. Programmatically speaking the laity question can thus be summed up in the formula: the Christian and daily work.

With the laity question stated in this way the church's task is defined as gathering and equipping the laity for their service of witness in the world. Christian existence between church and world was expressed in this two-way movement of gathering and sending out. This led to specific initiatives for the reform of church structures.

The ecumenical interest in the

vocation and mission of the laity is linked explicitly and implicitly with the concern for the missionary renewal of the church and the integration of church and mission. Even though this was not strictly intended by the earlier laity movement, this initiative contributed in the long term to strengthening the institutional presence of the churches in secular society, in other words, to the development of a wide variety of church social institutions and agencies with a specialized professional staff.

There can be no doubt that this rediscovery of the vocation of the laity, combined with the efforts for the missionary renewal of the church, gave an important impetus to inculturation, i.e. the process of adjusting Christian witness to the modern, rational, constantly changing world. The laity were understood as the church's advocates in the everyday situations in the world.

What has changed since then?

After an interval of thirty years one is struck first by the extent to which the earlier ecumenical discussion on the laity was influenced by the experience and situation of the old traditional churches in Europe and North America. The change of perspective which has since taken place, and the increased ecumenical awareness of the very different conditions facing the churches in the countries of the South, make it necessary to re-examine and re-define the profile of the laity.

It must be admitted that, even in the churches where the ecumenical discussion on the laity had initially met with a widespread response, we today find a regression to a very much older understanding of the laity as in some sense an inferior status. The laity are the "ordinary" church members, as opposed to:

°the specialists and experts, which, in the church, means the theologians. The laity are considered incompetent when it comes to specialized theological knowledge. They are recipients of information and the target group for church educational activities;

° the professionals or full-time church workers. The laity, especially the voluntary workers, often find themselves powerless, a presence that disturbs the smooth running of things, in some cases even as undesirable rivals for the fulltime workers;

° the ordained ministers. The laity cannot claim any legitimation deriving from their office but can only exercise personal authority.

As the ordinary members the laity stand in contrast to the "real church" which is represented as an organization by its full-time staff, especially its theologically qualified office-bearers. In these circumstances the old definition of the laity as the representatives and advocates of the church in the world no longer holds. In view of the growing specialization of church services and areas of work in many churches it is becoming increasingly difficult to find competent lay people to undertake voluntary work and take their share of responsibility.

Against this background we can also see more clearly how much the earlier profile of the laity in the ecumenical discussion was determined by the active, responsible role played by men in professional life and in society. Very few women could ever hope to measure up to this particular definition of the "mature lay person". It would not be particularly helpful as a way out of the dilemma for us now to put a renewed emphasis on the definition of the laity as advocates as opposed to their status as ordinary members. Of course, lay people can advocate a vision of a future church as against the realism of the experts; they can advocate participation rather than insistence on professional competence; they can advocate autonomy over against authority based on office. Of course, the laity still represent the greatest potential force in any process of ecumenical renewal of the church. Yet this profile remains bound into an elitist approach and does not lead beyond the limits of the earlier concept of the laity.

peter williams, wcc

General Secretary Dr. Konrad Raiser at the World Convention of Christian Lay Training Centres and Movements.

These doubts are heightened when we see that the traditional church model on which the earlier laity concept depended is now very much beset by doubts. Many sociological investigations of religion and the churches in Europe and North America in the past twenty years stress that the majority of

members of the mainstream churches now have only a detached sense of church membership. The traditional forms of church life in the congregation, worship and church groups are disintegrating. Above all, among the coming generation, Christian socialization is increasingly slight, the level of knowledge about the faith is decreasing, and the doubts are being reinforced by the steady loss of members affecting almost all the mainstream churches. Church structures are under increasing pressure to modernize.

At the same time the rational secularity of the "secular world" is in deep crisis. There is talk of the end of the modern, or the "post-modern", and doubts about the feasibility of progress are widespread. The basic social infrastructure constituted by the family, neighbourly relations and professional associations is disintegrating, causing a crisis of fundamental moral values. In this situation — which is sketched only in very rough outline here — it would appear that, in the church and social context of Europe and North America, the influence of the laity has migrated to the wide variety of movements and initiatives which have developed around the church and in society. The increasing number of evangelical, fundamentalist and charismatic groups, but also the growing influence of new religious movements, are largely supported by "lay people" in the classical sense; but also the Christian base communities and the movements critical of society or of the churches which have sprung up around the churches — and not least the women's movement — are also essentially the result of lay initiatives.

Outlining the new profile of the laity

The goal of lay commitment is the rebuilding of viable, non-exclusive social forms that will produce a community with a human face in which human dignity is recognized, basic human needs are satisfied and the diversity of cultural identities and human talents are duly recognized.

The quest for the new profile of the laity can thus also be set in the context of the newly emerging social movements which are one of the features of social developments in the past twenty years. Diverse as they are, they indicate the shortcomings of the traditional social, political and economic structures and institutional forms for regulating society, i.e. shortcomings in regard to recognition of different cultural identities, to the control and legitimacy of power and lastly also in regard to guarantees of elementary justice and respect for human rights.

A few comments must suffice to describe the very wide and diverse spectrum of the new social movements in greater detail:

° In the countries of the South we find above all movements of the marginalized, the poor, people who have lost their social status. The collective term of "people's movements" covers everything from movements of landless peasants, associations of indigenous population groups, to trade-union-type movements or co-operative ventures. In the northern industrial countries, where the older labour movement is losing some of its influence, many different new social movements have developed in particular among broad sections of the middle classes — most notably the peace movement, the environmental movement and the women's movement, as well as numerous solidarity movements.

° Most of the social movements are primarily defensive, in other words, aimed at preserving the elementary basis of life and averting acute threats, rather than at radical change in society or even the struggle for political power. They take shape in response to quite specific problems which are directly perceived as life-threatening.

° In recent years it has been possible to build up network structures among the different social movements; but it is difficult to deploy these strategically for higher political or social goals.

° One of the consequences of the defensive nature of most of the social movements is that they can be altogether ambivalent in their effect. They may work for change or then again they may defend the status quo.

More recently, the emergence of the new social movements has been linked with the renewed interest in the "civil society". Like the phenomenon of the social movements itself, the concept of the civil society is also ambiguous. At all events, social movements and networks should not simply be equated with the civil society. Rather, the concept of the civil society is an open, tentative concept intended to enhance our ability to perceive social reality in the tension between the global system and the actual world in which people live their lives. In the context of this search for the outlines of the civil society, the new social movements can be seen as the advocates of the life-world, the practical every-day wisdom and living reality of ordinary people, i.e. not just of the socially degraded and marginalized but of everyone who feels him or herself powerless and condemned to silence in face of the global threats to survival. This new understanding of advocacy in the sense of de-

fending the independence of the life-world and practical every-day knowledge could thus be an important element in the new profile of the laity in the ecumenical movement.

In the ecumenical setting it was above all the conciliar process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation which showed us the significance of base church movements as the embodiment of the new profile of the laity. Justice, peace and creation signify the crucial dimensions of the threat to people's lives from the dynamic of global processes. The conciliar discussion on justice, peace and the integrity of creation also reminded us afresh that the biblical social order of the covenant and of Shalom applies to this sphere of everyday life which lies below the institutional controls of economic and political macro-systems. The ultimate goals of a culture of non-violence, solidarity and respect for the integrity of creation seek to give new life to this order of Shalom — an order of peace and justice for the whole creation.

The Laity as Agents of the Ecumenical Learning Process

In the earlier laity discussion lay people were described as the church's advocates in the world. Then came a second phase when the laity were considered first and foremost as the agents of initiatives for church renewal. The conciliar process as a new form of ecumenical lay movement has led to lay people being identified as the agents of ecumenical learning processes, this being understood here to mean a movement in search of new direction, an effort to find a new language to express the perception of reality in the tension between system and life-world. Ecumenical learning understood as the process of finding a new language is also a form of fighting back against the disempowerment of ordinary people and their pragmatic knowledge and experience by the domination of experts.

The notion of "conciliar learning" refers to the understanding of conciliarity as the specific form of dealing with conflicts and reaching decisions within the churches. The distinction between conciliar and discursive learning, the undirected form of public debate as a means of examining and evolving fundamental social options and moral guidelines, is thus analogous to the earlier distinction between church and world. Now, however, it is no longer a question of the distinctness and interrelatedness of two opposite spheres, but rather of two dimensions of the one reality. Conciliar learning aims constantly to link the biblical knowledge of faith and hope afresh with human empirical knowledge. Justice, peace and the integrity of creation are at one and the same time the focal points of the real, global, daily threats to life and central expressions of biblical perspectives of hope. Conciliar learning describes the process of projecting the all-embracing vision of justice, peace and the integrity of creation into everyday reality. It is a question of detecting points of intersection where the perspective of hope springs to life in the midst of threat. This can also be described as a process of literacy training, in other words, discerning and spelling out the signs of the times, in order to open up afresh the forces of hope contained in the tradition of the faith.

In conclusion, these thoughts on the new ecumenical laity movement as a movement of discursive and conciliar learning may be summarized briefly as follows:

° The willingness to enter actively into this process of ecumenical learning as a movement in search of viable and empowering forms of human community can be taken as the criterion for the ecumenical laity movement. This willingness is constantly endangered and challenged because the learning process is rejected on two counts in the church and in society.

° The new laity movement which is outlined in profile here, is of crucial importance for the future of the ecumenical movement. In contrast to the tendency of fundamentalism it insists that truth — and hence also human reality — can only be recognized in community. Any consensus reached through discourse, any conciliar formulation of the confession of hope depends on the reception it is given. The ecumenical fellowship and the belonging together of Christians and churches is not grounded in the same mentality, the same doctrine or the same order, but in their partaking and sharing in the all-encompassing reality of God, the source of life and hope.

° Through their practice of active networking in the form of covenants the new laity movement opens up a specific experience of catholicity for the ecumenical fellowship, that is to say, the presence of the whole and the universal in each particular day to day reality, which does not depend on the efficient functioning of global structures.

This is an abridged version of the address given on the World Convention of Christian Lay Training Centres and Movements.

Translated from the German Language Service, WCC

SRI LANKA

SOLUTIONS OR STALEMATE?

It was a hot, bumpy ride along the narrow road which ran beside the shore, more than four kilometres out of the town of Batticaloa. No stores, just a few houses fringing the road, the ocean always very close, and the sun beating down, with a few coconut palms here and there for shade. Then we came upon them — sixty four refugee families, camping out in two long cajun huts set up on the beach, with a few lethal-looking wires strung up for electricity, and not much else.

I'd driven out to visit the refugees with the representative of Quaker Peace and Service in Batticaloa, Penny Robbins, and with "PK", of the Catholic-run Eastern Human Economic Development organization, EHED. Together they were trying to discover the needs of the refugees, and how these might be met. The group leaders said that for three years they had been in a refugee camp in Colombo. A few weeks previously, authorities had bundled them into a bus — some against their will — driven them to this new camp, and left them there late at night to fend for themselves. They were given dry rations, but the promise of a new well — in place of the nearby private well, their only source of water — had not materialised. Neither had schooling for their children, nor regular access to fresh vegetables, fish, meat and fruit. When those who had the necessary permits crossed the lagoon in search of these necessities, the ferry fare mysteriously doubled. With no means of transport out of this isolated stretch of shore, they felt deserted and alone.

The outcome for these stranded families was a relatively happy one. With Catholic-Quaker help (in itself an unusual ecumenical combination!) permits were obtained and transport provided to enable them to inspect the areas to which they wished to go, some meeting with friends and family who were ready to help them to resettle. Before I left Sri Lanka I heard that all of them had left the camp and had found home and shelter elsewhere.

But for many thousands of refugees, all over Sri Lanka, there still seems to be little hope of any return home. True, the situation in parts of the East — Batticaloa and Trincomalee in particular — is gradually improving. Here and there along the road from Polon-

elizabeth salter, wcc

naruwa to Batticaloa, amongst the shattered ruins of shops and house and schools, in deserted villages, little cajun huts are appearing, signs of fragile hope in places where, not so long ago, the burning and bloodshed had sown terror and despair. Trucks bearing food and other goods move in and out of the area. Shops are open, children play in the street, and by day the streets of the towns are bustling with trade. Muslims and Tamils are slowly accepting the fact that, whatever the horrors of the past, they have to live side by side.

But the price of this slow return to normality is a heavy one. In the eastern zone, all the way to Batticaloa, there are innumerable road blocks, with the police or military checking everyone who passes. Wide stretches of jungle on either side of the road remain cleared and barren, to enable the massive army presence to maintain constant vigilance. The LTTE are never far away. They no longer attack villagers nor burn down houses, but government forces are aware that many in the East are sympathetic to their cause and remain ready to support them. The result is a draconian régime, a massive police and military presence and continuing suspicion about Sinhala intentions in the region.

It is hard enough for anyone with no experience of living in the East to imagine what it must be like. It is correspondingly harder to envisage life in the Jaffna peninsula. Although I was not able to visit Jaffna this time, I have vivid memories of my journey there three years ago, of the shattered buildings, the rubble-filled streets, the difficulties of everyday living with no electricity, few medical supplies, a constant battle to find enough food, fuel, transport, and the constant fear of air attacks and shelling. I talked with many Sri Lankans who still have to bear the privations of living in the North. Very little seems to have changed, as the battle between the LTTE and government forces continues, and innocent citizens and Tigers and troops alike swell the ranks of the dead and wounded.

Little seems to have changed, too, at the level of political dialogue. Although both sides proclaim themselves to be ready to come to the conference table to discuss the issue of the Tamil claim to self-determination, if only the other side will show the same willingness, there is stalemate. Politicians wrangle endlessly, some even within the same party, determined to hang on to power. Senior army officers, politicians, even the President himself, are brutally murdered, and life goes on almost as if nothing had happened. It is as though everyone had become mesmerised by their problem, but remained totally incapable of extricating themselves from it. Countless conversations I held with politicians, human rights workers, educators, lawyers, Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim, were almost obsessively concerned with the fact that the conflict dragged on and on, and no-one had yet found the key to open the door to new initiatives, new proposals.... new hope.

And the role of the churches? Notwithstanding the courageous and controversial stand of the Anglican Bishop of Colombo, Dr. Kenneth Fernando, in making the journey to Jaffna with other church persons, and meeting, during his visit, with the Tiger leader Prabakaran, it seemed that there were few people in the churches ready to follow up this stand and to speak out boldly. Instead, in many instances, I heard that many church people, clergy and laity alike, are not engaging actively in the struggle for peace and justice in their divided society. The tendency to practice aggressive, simplistic evangelism, I was told, was growing. This was evident, not only in the mainstream churches, but also in the rash of sects coming into Sri Lanka from outside, and setting up their own churches with little or no regard for the sensitivities of a society where religious tolerance had been practised for centuries. The resultant damage to harmonious and creative relations with other religious communities — Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim — was a matter for grave concern.

There were, however, positive signs that others in the churches were taking active steps to cooperate with their brothers and sisters of other faiths in building bridges of trust and confidence. A meeting of the newly formed Inter-Religious Peace Foundation was to me an encouraging sign of the desire of some Buddhists and Christians to work together in forging bonds of peace. They were well aware of the difficulties, and of the antagonisms such an initiative was sure to arouse. As yet no Hindus or Muslims have joined them, but the purpose of the foundation — to create the right environment to end the war, and to find ways of easing the suffering of all communities — is a sign of real hope

Although both sides proclaim themselves to be ready to come to the conference table to discuss the issue of the Tamil claim to self-determination, if only the other side will show the same willingness, there is stalemate.

for all people of faith, and for all peacemakers in Sri Lanka.

Three years ago, in the report of a WCC ecumenical pastoral team visit to Sri Lanka, entitled "Plurality, Passion and Power", we wrote:- "The Church is present in Sri Lanka as a serving, and frequently suffering community. It is never easy to speak and act boldly in situations of great violence and strife. It is particularly costly to be bearers of repentance and reconciliation when that violence is internal, when members of the Church find their loyalty to each other, as sisters and brothers in Christ, severely tested because of differences which spring from other sources, based on caste, ethnicity, gender, politics, economics or history. Lives can be, and frequently are, at grave risk when courageous people speak out boldly.

"Yet the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. The call to be one in Christ is still a Gospel imperative. When Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one, he knew that obedience to that call would mean, often, sacrificing self for the sake of the other. We would be failing our sisters and brothers in the churches in Sri Lanka if we did not remind them of that ecumenical imperative, to seek unity with each other in order to be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ, together, in spite of, and even because of our differences."

elizabeth salter, wcc

I have quoted extensively from the final paragraphs of the report because I believe that these words are still as true as ever they were. The team members then were deeply disturbed by the continuing bitter conflict, and by the fact that the divisions which rent the rest of society apart were also, sadly, evident amongst many members of the Christian community. Each ethnic group is in some sense a mirror image of the other. The accusations levelled against the rival group are repeated again and again, by both sides. By the end of my stay, notwithstanding my affection for this beautiful country and its people, the warm friendship and hospitality which is always shown to me, and the evidence of so much sacrificial service within the Church in Sri Lanka, I came away with feelings of sadness and frustration.

Can the Church, small and vulnerable as it is, truly find a role as the bearer of repentance and reconciliation within Sri Lankan society? Seeking repentance from the other is one matter: being prepared to repent, for the sake of the Gospel, and for the sake of the other, is quite another. I have thought, often, of the little refugee children, playing on the sand of that hot seashore outside Batticaloa. Will they grow up with the mistrust, suspicion, violence and death which was the daily lot of their parents? Or will they live their lives in freedom and justice, as they and all children everywhere deserve? If the Christian community can remain true to the Gospel call to be peacemakers, then maybe there is a future for Sri Lankan children, far better than their parents ever knew. I pray that when next I return to Sri Lanka, God willing, that prayer will be realised.

Elizabeth Salter
Programme Unit III, WCC
26th August 1993

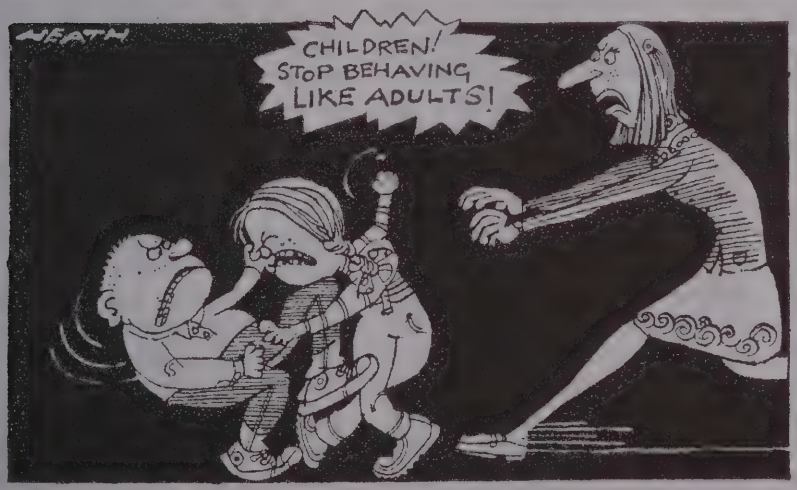
"When Jesus prayed that his disciples might be one, he knew that obedience to that call would mean, often, sacrificing self for the sake of the other. We would be failing our sisters and brothers in the churches in Sri Lanka if we did not remind them of that ecumenical imperative, to seek unity with each other in order to be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ, together, in spite of, and even because of our differences."

STANDING UP FOR PEACE

Three new projects, all linked to Unit III's central concern for peace, are planned for 1994. Already we are mobilising the resources of the churches to ensure that the projects respond to some deeply-felt needs. This is just a preview -but watch this space! Better still, send us your reactions and comments.

Number One is already well under way - the setting up of a database of church-related peace groups, linked to our worldwide constituency. Responses to a request for information sent out to every member church, several months ago, have been encouraging — and exciting! We had no idea that there were so many and such varied initiatives, ranging from campaigns against war toys and peace education programmes in schools, to involvement in difficult peace processes in a range of local, national and regional conflicts.

In fact, the response has been so good that we are thinking of publishing the database as a handy booklet. It would give information about groups dealing with peace education, mediation, non-violent conflict resolution and peacemaking on local, national and regional levels. By all accounts, this could prove to be a valuable resource for churches and others involved in peace issues. Could you use it?



heath, britain

Number Two is planned for 1st - 5th June 1994: a consultation of church-related people actually engaged in seeking peace and reconciliation in conflict situations around the world —activists, theologians and trainers. The goal is a network of peacemakers related to the WCC, working with the churches themselves in promoting peace activities as a central concern. In other words — moving a little further along the road towards a culture of non-violence, of life and of positive peace.

In a series of workshops participants will find common themes, seek ways for mutual strengthening, and identify resources for peacemaking needed by the churches in their work at local level. Similar regional consultations may well follow this global gathering.

The Consultation — "Building a Culture of Peace: Visions and Work for the Churches" — will be at the Corrymeela Community centre in Ballycastle, Northern Ireland. The venue is a very special one. The Corrymeela Community, with its deep spiritual roots, has been active for over two decades in seeking reconciliation between divided communities in this troubled region. It is known as a place where Catholics and Protestants can, and do, meet to pray, talk and act together. So participants will be able, through visits and briefings, to learn more about the troubled political and religious scene in Northern Ireland.

Number Three is a workshop on non-violence: training for trainers. With the theme "Living with our Differences: Non-Violent Responses to Conflict", the workshop will be held at the Château de Bossey, the WCC's Ecumenical Institute near Geneva, from 5th - 14th August 1994. Facilitators from several regions will explore with participants the spiritual roots of a non-violent approach to conflict, look at a range of situations where differing demands pose often intolerable dilemmas, and search together for solutions rooted in a common Christian faith. The goal will be to stimulate and empower those who intend to conduct similar training programmes of their own in their regions.

If you are interested to know more about any or all of these projects, please contact Elizabeth Salter, International Affairs, Unit III, at the World Council of Churches.

A DAILY JOURNAL FROM SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

Personal Reflections and Observations on the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order

The Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order was held last August in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. Delegates from around the world met to explore the theme "Koinonia in Faith, Life and Witness". Unit III of the WCC had cooperated with Unit I and the Faith and Order Commission in a consultation on Koinonia and Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, as a contribution to the Faith and Order World Conference. Its report, "Costly Unity", was distributed to all delegates. Staff member Wesley Granberg-Michaelson of Unit III attended the Conference in Santiago de Compostela. What follows are excerpts from a journal of personal reflections from that time.

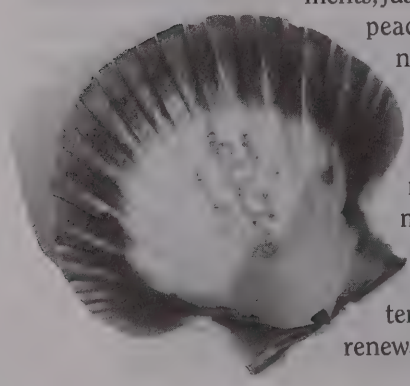
Wesley Granberg-Michaelson

August 4, 1993

From presentations at the opening of the Conference, these items strike me:

A key insight, so often lost, is that unity is impossible without talking about renewal. Renewal involves repentance, commitment, metanoia, inspiration, etc. And such renewal historically has been a source of ecumenical vision and initiative.

Experiences of "renewal communities" nearly always involve a deeply ecumenical dimension. Renewing the vision and experience of being the church—including, for instance, dimensions of pentecostal/charismatic renewal movements, justice and peace renewal groups, laity renewal movements, even contemplative renewal movements—involve a new sense of ecumenical openness and belonging to a wider Christian family.



So unity makes no sense unless connected to renewal. And here worship also plays a central role, as well as expressions of spirituality. Renewed into unity; this is the starting point.

Regarding the stress on koinonia in witness—what would this really mean for our work in Unit III on justice, peace and creation? What would our work be like if we tried to bring the dimension of koinonia—meaning to continually widen the participation together of churches and groups in our actual work—as an essential part of our *methodology*, as a part of our goal?

I am struck by the parallels between ecological paradigms and ecumenical ones. All things interdependent, organically related. Diversity is the life of the whole, and that which actually enables unity. Connectedness is a given. What we do is to deny or destroy the reality of this belonging to a whole...

August 5

The presentation on biblical views of koinonia by Dr Chan, a Pentecostal from Singapore, stressed the relational nature of the Trinity and its correspondence to the life of church. What struck me were the potential links and points of connections with dimensions of Orthodox theology on trinitarian life. John of Pergamon picked up some of the same points in his presentation today. It boils down to this: if the life of the Trinity (meaning the very being of God) is relational, at its core, then participation in that life has radical implications for our understanding, and participation, in the life of the church community—at local, specific, concrete level. A life of openness, mutual interdependence, giving and receiving—these are the characteristics of what it means to share in koinonia, for it is a real participation, in flesh and blood, in the life of God. Desmond Tutu's address was stunning. His examples of how unity is discovered in the midst of struggles for justice could not have been stated better—the koinonia experienced among 50 church leaders praying after they were arrested and were awaiting trial, for example. But the real plea of Tutu was for a renewed life of prayer, spirituality, and contemplation; these he sees as intrinsically linked to actions like the struggle against apartheid.

I wish Tutu had been given time to say more about his conviction that Christians are simply creating and experiencing ecumenical realities in local situations; they must forge ahead boldly, letting the theologians sort out all the "messiness" and questions that result... One of the most perplexing realities of our day is that ecu-

menical experiences of growing numbers of persons in their own lives are simply moving far more rapidly than the organized ecumenical attempts to theologize, rationalize, and bring a structure of agreed upon authority to such situations. The danger that we face, it seems to me, is that formal ecumenical theology about the search for unity is increasingly disconnected from the personal ecumenical experiences of individuals, churches, and groups at local levels. It is much more than just a fissure between abstract theology and contextual life situations. Rather, the traditional goals, categories, and concerns of the search for unity simply don't connect in lively, relevant, and helpful ways to the points where people are seeking and encountering new ecumenical experiences of Christian unity today.

August 6

I met today with six pentecostals here as delegates. Several in the group stressed the *experience* of broadening ecumenically relationships with others as key, rather than seeking unity through theological debate and clarification, or the other efforts toward convergence. But in this the pentecostals and (some) evangelicals would be on the side of the movements, and doing theology from context and experience, rather than the so-called western academic approach.

August 9

At lunch I talked with a longtime officer in the Presbyterian Church U. S. "Everything being done here is correct," he said, "and it is all incorrect." He explained that the vital points of growth in the churches today, and the real points of ecumenical encounter, are simply not connected to the traditional agenda of the search for unity. The mainline denominations, he added, stand in desperate need of renewal; and they can't simply be forsaken. But traditional ecumenism is not meeting those needs for vitality and renewal.

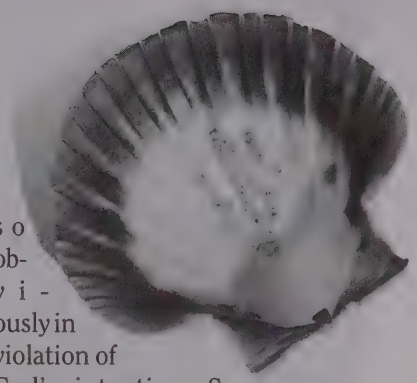
At tea break, a bishop and former Faith and Order staff member said almost the same thing, in different words. "We keep thinking that we are dealing with 'de jure' ecumenism. But we're not. The best we can do is really only a response to 'de facto' ecumenism."

August 10

Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said at the opening of his talk, "The quality of our participation in the shaping of the ecumenical future will depend on the degree to which we respond to God's grace." If only we all really acted on that. Responding to God's grace—to all the ways and places and points where we know that the grace of God is present—this should be at the heart of ecumenism. But precisely the opposite seems true. Ecclesiastical structures and theological assumptions—even in ecumenical conferences—prevent us precisely from responding to God's grace.

The most vivid and painful point is the eucharist. Tonight a "protestant" eucharist was celebrated in one of the cathedrals. The service was rich and moving. Following communion I saw three Orthodox colleagues, with whom I have shared deeply over the past years, sitting there unable to participate. The pain was suddenly overwhelming. All the theological rationales at that moment are simply nonsense. God's grace was present there, richly, just as it is in their eucharistic liturgies. And they could not respond. There simply is no excuse for us to be in such a situation.

We regularly condone civil disobedience by church people and leaders in situations, like South Africa, were laws and realities are so obviously in violation of God's intention. So when will we condone ecclesiastical disobedience around the eucharist is the face of laws and understandings so clearly opposed to God's purposes?



August 12

I encountered a member of the Faith and Order Commission who had also been a key participant at the Rønde, Denmark consultation and its Report, "Costly Unity." I said to him honestly, being at my first Faith and Order meeting, that I had a naive question. What actually did people here mean today when they speak of "visible unity?" Just what would this look like, concretely? Could someone please describe this? After 10 days at Santiago, I still couldn't give a clear answer to that question if asked.

He thought that, at least for many, this was not at all irrelevant. The concrete vision or descriptions of visible unity in the past clearly have been fading. United churches, shared communion, recognition of ministry, agreed upon patterns or a symbol of authority, etc. The resistance from formal structures remains formidable in many cases. So then, what is the way forward? What do we mean?

One path, of course, is that suggested by "Costly Unity." That report stresses the search for "new conciliar structures" which can express the sense of mutual accountability and *koinonia* among growing numbers of the churches—and among Christians in countless local settings sharing worship, community, and witness—in common engagement around God's purposes in the world.

peter williams, wcc

A highlight of the opening worship was the censing of the altar with the traditional swinging of the "botafumeiro", a large censer suspended by rope from the ceiling of the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela.

One has to be ecumenically blind to deny that this is at least one fresh and vital source of Christian *koinonia* evidenced in the world today. And it is very visible. It also raises all kinds of messy ecclesiological and theological issues—precisely the kind of "messiness" which requires a reflective theological task. Part of pursuing the central goal of "visible unity" must be, then, travelling down this road to discover where it may lead. And precisely here, focused reflection on the issues of ecclesiology are essential. There is no doubt in my mind, that ecumenical work around JPIC suffers from a serious ecclesiological deficit. This is all the more reason why engaging the issues of ecclesiology and ethics seems vital, not just for Faith and Order or for Unit III, but for the WCC as a whole.

August 13

In plenary discussion, delegates from the South gave voice to the continuing gap between basic thought patterns and ways of understanding. This division is as decisive as any "theological disagreement" today. Again, this is not adequately described as the difference between "classical and contextual" theologies. More fundamental issues such as the assumed division between word and action, the interaction between symbol and thought, and the understanding of the human person and all life rooted in relational realities, are the issues here, and the source of division and alienation. Interesting that on these points, usually expressed by those from the South, Orthodox perspectives like those articulated in John of Pergamon's presentation, have much to contribute.

Konrad Raiser's address gave clear attention to the issue of constituencies in the one ecumenical movement. He increasingly sees the ecumenical task as a dialogue of "different Christian cultures," meaning specifically "eastern Byzantine, western Roman, western Protestant, and predominantly southern Evangelical or Pentecostal." The task, then, is an "ecumenical inter-cultural hermeneutic which will enable us to comprehend unity as a fellowship of those who continue to be different, and offer criteria for this."

Konrad came back to emphasize the central role of conversion in any true convergence toward the "centre of koinonia." This note had been struck only briefly during these days. And he also picked up the theme of discovering, building upon, and making manifest the "already existing communion." All this would be a "fundamental change of orientation."

I could not agree more. And "koinonia" as the point of orientation does give the possibility of a freer and fresher exploration of moving towards new expressions of "visible unity." Yet, I am left, on this last day, still wondering deeply what it actually means to act on these points. What would such a conversion actually look like? What programme(s) would result from such a new orientation? What does it mean for us?

We regularly observe that the challenge of ecumenism today is threatening to the lives of many member churches, who are increasingly preoccupied with their own identities and issues of institutional self-preservation. But at Santiago, I began wondering if the same is true for the World Council of Churches. Are we free enough from our own self-preservation, from our preoccupations, from present self-understanding, from our images of ecumenical work, life, and constituencies to be open to the emerging challenges of koinonia?

August 16

My first day back in the "house." Colleagues want to know, usually in one minute, what Santiago was like. I find it hard to answer. Santiago de Compostela, at least in my ecumenical pilgrimage, clarified foundational questions facing not just Faith and Order, but the World Council of Churches in its identity, purpose, and vocation. That, finally, is where all the discussion about "koinonia," applied realistically to today's context, leads.

The questions I will be asking as a result of Santiago are ones like these. Who is our constituency? How can we build and nurture a truly inclusive ecumenical framework? How do we frame the fresh and challenging points of ecumenical dialogue? How do growing experiences of koinonia transform our search for "visible unity?" How do we pursue the path set forth by ecclesiology and ethics in expressing of koinonia, and in the desire for new conciliar structures?

Wesley Granberg-Michaelson
Programme Unit III, WCC

Odalie Adiao-Garcia

SINO ANG KANO? ASAAN ANG MGA BITUIN?

WHO IS AN AMERICAN? WHERE ARE THE STARS?

At Christmas time Filipino children are heard singing "Jingle Bells". A song depicting the joy of American children during Christmas while they ride the sleigh and frolic in the snow. While it never snows in the Philippines, snow lives in our consciousness. Don't we decorate our Christmas trees with cotton and white paper?

A Living Experience in Global Education

I grew up with the notion, but almost believing, that all Whites are Americans. Never mind if Magellan, our colonizer, was Portuguese. Only in college did I internalize the reality that "Whites" could also be British, Spanish, German. It was also during this period when I internalized that the Americas included South America, Canada and the USA. Yet, at the back of my mind, the "Whites" were still the Americans. Yes, there were Asians, Africans, Hispanics in the United States, but they were only emigrants. Therefore, not the real American.

Because of my socialization and, more importantly, my education, white became an overpowering symbol in my life, my consciousness:

Snow is white
Our God is white
Angels wear white
Whites colonized the Philippines.

White became the symbol of what is beautiful, of goodness, of cleanliness and purity, of heroes, of success. Superman, Batman, and Spiderman are all comic heroes — they are all white. I guess this may be the reason why we, at Initiatives for International Dialogue (IID), had great difficulties locally marketing unrefined sugar or muscavado. It had the colour of the earth, and in the words of friends — the sugar looked dirty, wasn't pure and did not taste well with Nescafe.

As a child, we had our share of cowboy and Indian movies. The cowboys were mostly Whites. They were the good guys. They won the battles. Even their horses had names, the most famous being Silver. The Indians on the other hand always lost the battles. They were bad, uncivilized. Today the word Indian in the Philippines implies: "a person who does not keep his word or promise, untrustworthy (Walang indiyanan, ha.); stupid, uncivilized (as in the Tagalog ditty, Indiyan pana kakanakana, labas betlog kakalogkalog.)

Then I saw the movie *A Man called Horse* and I learned about the goodness of the Indians, the truth about America. The Indians had a culture, a creating worldview, a respect for the living as well as for the dead. They are the first Americans. Prompting the Mennonites for the centennial celebration of the "discovery" of the United States to state:

"Five hundred years ago, the Americans discovered Columbus on their shores. How do you think they felt about it?"

I went to New Mexico, one of the 50 states of the USA, last September 1992, to attend a conference on global education sponsored by the World Council of Churches and the Office of Global Education of the National Council of Churches in the US. The journey changed me and my concept of our role in development: each one of us, every man, woman and child is a co-creator of this world. A change in worldview that brought me peace and demanded humility — in my relating with nature, other beings, my role in development.

In New Mexico man is one with nature. Here, the people, mostly native American Indians, Hispanics and people of colour (as con-

trasted to "Whites") live their lives according to the beat, pace and rhythm of nature. Here the desert meets the mountains and the heavens. Here, 38 people from 18 countries reflected on the role of global education in achieving justice, peace and preserving the integrity of creation. Part of the conference was a three day exposure visit to native American communities to learn how they participated in co-creating a new life, a new America. Together with four other participants, I lived in Mora, a small, and one of the poorest, municipality of the United States. Here we were introduced to the "other" Americans who were evolving in their world. Here, I met Jose, a Picuris Indian, and Teresa, his wife.

Teresa and Jose have four children — Dionicia, Connie, Christina and Zandar. Zandar means little skunk. I was Puzzled why anyone would name a child after a skunk, but Jose replied, "The skunk is a very powerful animal, it does not have to do anything to defeat its enemy".

They live in the mountains of Mora, surrounded by trees, the earth, the sky. You could see mountain meeting mountain from their home. They live simple lives. Something very different to what is commonly known as mainstream American lifestyle. They live in an adobe house and have no electricity, but derive power to run their lights, small TV and radio from solar energy. They fetch their water from the stream, heating comes from the cooking stove and a furnace in the living room. These fuelled by logs which they cut from the trees around them. They eat what they harvest. The fish we had that night for dinner was caught in a lake a mile away from their home. They seldom go to convenient stores or malls.

While wandering around the mountain, Zandar jumped on their earth coloured horse and rode it bareback. The sky was turning grey and Zandar shouted, "The rain is coming in around five minutes. I wonder if it'll snow tonight?". And after around five minutes, the rain did come. Soft, gentle rain and we continued walking. Jose showed me the wigwam he was building facing the east. Teresa explained the value of almost each plant we passed. She pointed to the place where they were putting up a grotto. On our way home, we carried logs for the stove and furnace.

Dinner was simple — cornbread from their harvest, salmon from the lake, small sweet peaches and mint tea from their garden. Jose shared their history by explaining the use, value and significance of arrowhead, flints and stones, bullets he had acquired. "Each arrowhead and flint has its own story to tell. Each one is a symbol of a tribe, a period when they were made. For every bullet, I hear the cries of anguish of men, women, children killed in battle."

He continued, "Every time we find these things, we ask the Great Spirit forgiveness for whatever harm they may have inflicted Mother Earth". He then handed me two arrowheads and a turquoise necklace, "These are for your children". I had nothing of value to give them in return and declined to take the gift. Solemnly he replied, "In our ways, we give and the Great Spirit gives back. Your accepting these gifts will mean you are part of our life, and we of yours". I cried.

We slept at midnight. Around four a.m. Teresa woke me up, "Put on your coat, you have to see this before you leave".

We quietly, almost reverently met the icy wind and the darkness. "Look at the stars", Teresa whispered. And suddenly, the darkness was showered with the soft, yellowish light from the moon and the stars. We worshipped God, the night, the stars. And, as in prayer, Teresa said, "We are not against the government's development project, nor progress, as long as we don't lose the stars".

Later in the morning, we went to a small brook near a side road where travellers stop for drinking water. Zandar gathered some plants and gave me some to eat. He said they make very good salad. He cupped his hands and drank from the brook. "Mineral water, drink", he ordered. I hesitated, imagining amoeba and an upset stomach, but I cupped my hand and drank from the brook. The water was sweet.

That same morning we went back to Abiquiu, New Mexico. A participant asked what image of global education I would take back home, I answered: "Zandar riding his earth-red horse up the mountain, wind in his hair".

The people of Mora, in the evolution and creation of a more humane and new America are truly free — even as they live in a society still burdened by discrimination.

Who is an American? Where are the stars?

An afterthought

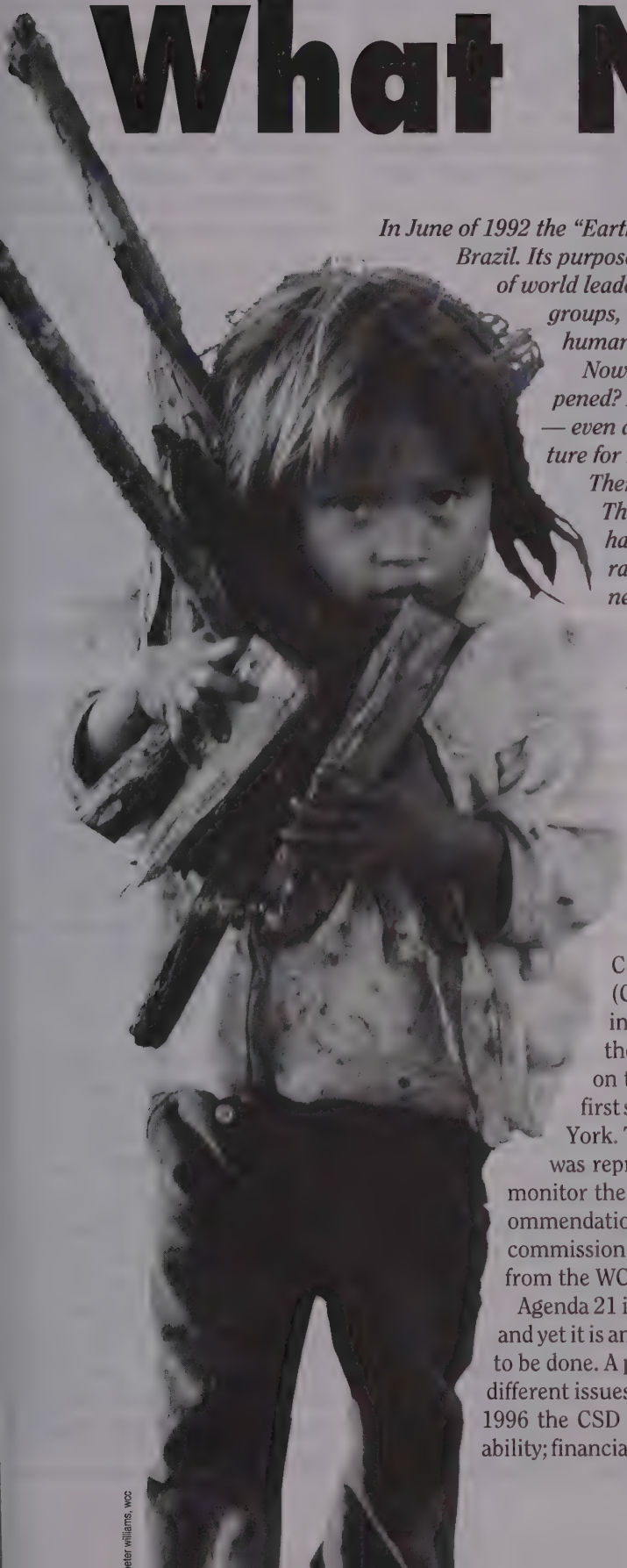
Last February, my youngest son, Pong, and I went to pick up my husband at a squatter community in Quezon City. It was 10 in the evening and the community was quiet. Except for a few men who were preparing corn for boiling to sell the next day. Pong and I sat on the curb of the now empty street. Pong looked up at the sky and pointed to the stars. And suddenly, the stars assumed the same meaning as in Mora. Where are the stars? It is with those who are one with Mother Nature, with those who are poor in spirit. It should be in each of us.

Odalie Adiao-Garcia works with IID (Initiatives for International Dialogue) Quezon City, Philippines and was a participant to the Conference on Global Education in Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, USA.

This article first appeared in Kapatiran, January 1993 issue.

UNCED

What Next?



In June of 1992 the "Earth Summit" was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Its purpose was to gather the shared commitments of world leaders, and the energies of non-governmental groups, to confront the threat to life facing the human community and the planet earth.

Now, almost two years later, what has happened? Has the Earth Summit moved us forward — even a little bit — to a sure and sustained future for next generations?

There is good news and there is bad news. The bad news of course is that not enough happened; not enough is happening. The radical shift in values and priorities that is needed to change the direction of the planet must finally be demonstrated by political will. One sees signs of hope, rare instances of real possibility, but not enough.

The good news is that the slow and ponderous political work moves forward, with real commitment on the part of many. What has become abundantly clear is that the political work can only proceed with the informed and effective participation of NGOs and other groups of civil society.

The United Nations has established the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), that body responsible for implementing the daunting Agenda 21 which sets out the steps which need to be taken to follow up on the UNCED work. This commission had its first substantive meeting 14-25 June 1993 in New York. The WCC, together with other NGO groups, was represented by a delegation of seven people to monitor the work of the commission and to make recommendations to the WCC future involvement with the commission. (The report of this delegation is available from the WCC Unit III, ECOS team.)

Agenda 21 is overwhelming — it fills over 800 pages — and yet it is an attempt to systematize the work that needs to be done. A priority schedule has been set up to address different issues each year over the next five years. In 1994-1996 the CSD will focus on critical elements of sustainability; financial resources and mechanisms; education, sci-

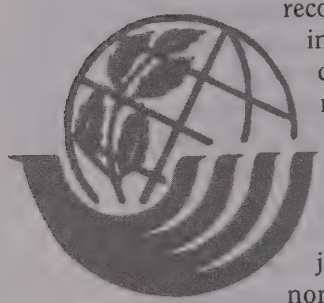
eter williams, wcc

ence, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building; and roles of major groups.

Within this context the WCC will emphasize two areas of work:

Climate Change

In a statement on atmospheric destruction, the WCC's 1990 world convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in Seoul urged churches in the North to recognize that their industrialized societies are the primary source of the problem. Between February 1991 and May 1992 the WCC joined with other non-governmental organizations in monitoring negotiations for an international climate change treaty to be signed at the June 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro.



Responding to an August 1992 call from the WCC Central Committee, an interregional task force prepared the first draft of a study guide. By reflecting on the theological and ethical dimensions of climate change and assessing its ecological, economic and political aspects from the perspective of justice, the text sought to provide a resource for church education and advocacy and a credible basis for WCC dialogue with international agencies about climate change. To strengthen its scope and credibility, the draft was then reviewed in the Pacific and Latin America and at meetings in Africa, Asia, Europe and North America.

Summarizing the rationale for WCC involvement, Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, executive secretary for Economy, Environment and Sustainable Society in the Programme Unit on Justice, Peace and Creation, says climate change issues "raise profound questions about the process of development pursued by human societies, particularly those in the North, and the long-term viability of current models. Addressing climate change is going to challenge basic economic assumptions - for example, the goal of maximizing economic growth - and may well provoke significant interregional conflict.

"The global community is insufficiently prepared to address these problems. Churches could assist by facilitating reflection on the basic values and ethics that should guide decision-making, and through analysis of some of the specific problems that the global community will have to face."

A study guide on what churches can do about issues related to climate change and global warming was finalized at a WCC-sponsored international consultation in Driebergen, The Netherlands (9-15 October, 1993).

The study guide, along with proposals for church action and a short policy statement for the WCC Central Committee meeting next January, grow out of a five-year WCC focus on how climate change and global warming threaten the well-being of creation and constitute a justice issue in North-South relations.

Earth Charter

In preparation for the Earth Summit, many people felt that something needed to be done to address the ethical and moral issues which lie behind the more technical decisions which need to be taken to address problems of environment and development. The WCC, together with other faith communities, worked hard during the months leading to the Earth Summit to develop an ethical framework, or Earth Charter, which was to be a statement of principles governing decisions and policy for environmental and economic justice.

Attempts to formulate an Earth Charter failed, but the resulting Rio Declaration constitutes an initial attempt to articulate foundational principles of ethical responsibility. Work on the substance of principles continues, particularly in the NGO community. Some of the follow-up work on the Earth Charter for NGOs is being monitored through the:

Earth Council / Consejo de la Tierra, / Conseil de la Terre (P.O. Box 2323-1002, San José, Costa Rica).

Based in Costa Rica, the Earth Council is a non-governmental organisation interested in the follow-up of the Rio Agreements from an independent perspective. Building on the existing charters and declarations, the Earth Council hopes to continue the work towards an Earth Charter. The WCC will work to contribute to this process.

The major emphasis of the UNCED follow-up still lies at the national level. This is where the work needs to be done. What can you do? Contact your government. Find out about their participation in the Commission on Sustainable Development. Search for other NGOs to work with. Begin a process of educating yourselves and your politicians.

Some of the following materials are good resources for you in this process:

Books and Documents

° The Earth Summit's AGENDA FOR CHANGE. A plain language version of Agenda 21 and the other Rio Agreements. (Michael Keating: Centre for our Common Future, Palais Wilson, 52 rue des Pâquis, CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland, US$10.00 - available in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian).

° Agenda 21: programme of Action for Sustainable Development. Final text of agreements negotiated by Governments on Environment and Development. Includes the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the Statement of Forest Principles as adopted by 178 governments. Useful in conjunction with the Rio Declaration which provides the context for its specific proposals and the statement of forest principles. ISBN 92-1-100509-4, US$ 25.00, UN Publications, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Fax (41) 22-917 0027.

° Network. The Independent Sectors' Network. A monthly newsletter which monitors and reports on follow-up activities to the Earth Summit. Published by the Centre for Our Common Future, Palais Wilson, 52 rue des Pâquis, CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland. Subscription US$30.00 annually.

WCC Publications related to UNCED

° Searching for the New Heavens and the New Earth, report of the ecumenical meeting at UNCED, available in English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese.

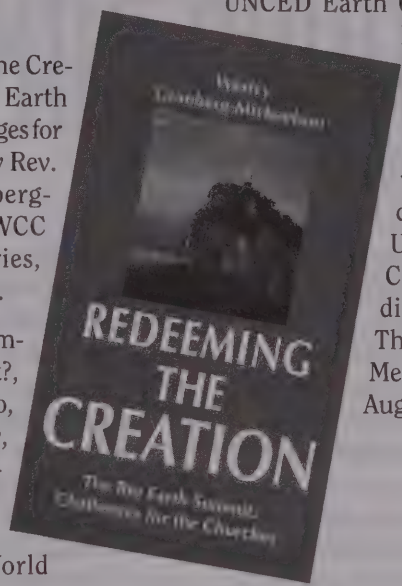
° Redeeming the Creation - The Rio Earth Summit: Challenges for the Churches, by Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, WCC Risk Book Series, September 1992.

° The Earth Summit - What Next?, a 30-minute video, broadcast quality, produced by Religious Television Associates on behalf of the World Council of Churches.

° Churches on Climate Change, a resource on global warming and the role of the churches, May, 1992.

° One Earth Community, report of inter-faith contribution to UNCED Earth Charter process, Bossey, August, 1991.

° One Earth Community, video of inter-faith contributions to UNCED Earth Charter process, distributed to the Third Preparatory Meeting of UNCED, August 1991.



SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: *A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?*

Opinions on "sustainable development" may differ, but today's dominant development model is unsustainable economically as well as morally and spiritually. Changing it will require "a major shift in patterns of production and consumption, especially among the rich nations".

That is one of the conclusions of a thirty-page report drafted by twenty-eight ecologists, economists and theologians from Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean who took part in a five-day mid-June consultation at the WCC's Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, near Geneva.

The meeting was sponsored by the Visser't Hooft Endowment Fund in cooperation with the Ecumenical Institute and the WCC's Programme Unit on Justice, Peace and Creation. The Fund, which honours the memory of the WCC's first general secretary (1948-66) Willem A. Visser't Hooft, is dedicated to the study of important contemporary issues from the perspective of the ecumenical movement.

Preparatory papers for the gathering included a review by UN Conference on Environment and Development consultant Janos Pasztor of the environment-development debate since the "Earth Summit" a year ago, a survey by Swiss Reformed theologian Lukas Vischer of ecumenical thought on humanity and creation, reflection by World Bank economist Herman E. Daly on ecological challenges to traditional economic understandings and a presentation on how countries in the South view the justice-ecology debate.

Peter Fanton

FOR THE COMPASSIONATE,

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES INTERNATIONAL YOUTH WORKSHOP ON HIV/AIDS

NOTHING HUMAN IS ALIEN

Honest dialogue means, speaking about what really is

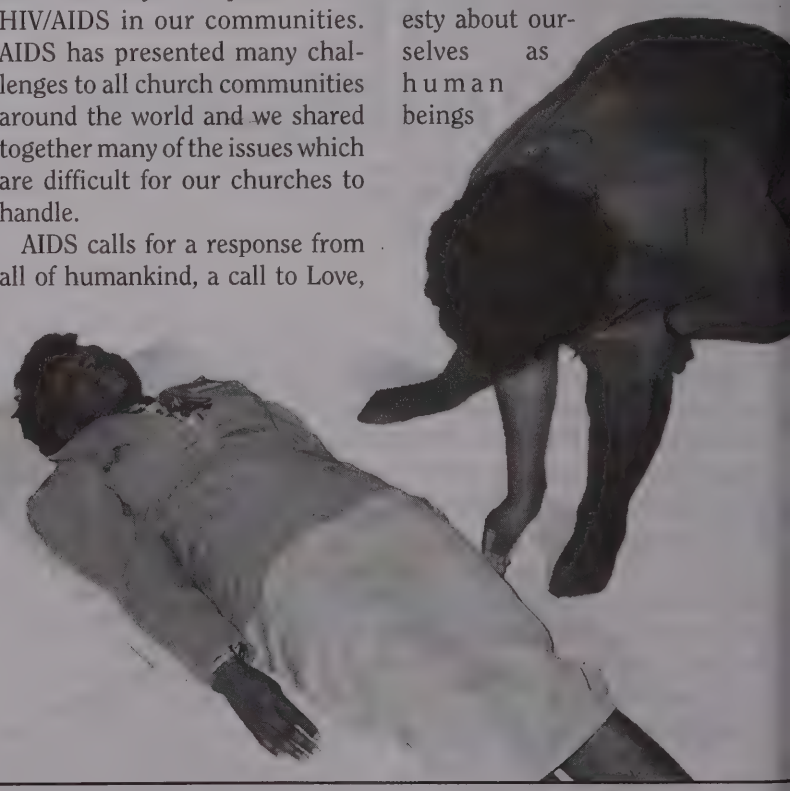
The city was Windhoek, Namibia, an African country which only three years ago gained its independence from South Africa. It is a new nation of hope and prospects for a peaceful future. Namibia is mainly dry and arid, a land of vast deserts, open plains as well as the most beautiful sand mountains in the world. It is a country which can appear most inhospitable and yet the many of us who came from all over the world to take part in a youth workshop on HIV/AIDS, found its people to be warm, generous and very rich in culture. Not far from the city centre, is the Namibian Evangelical Theological Seminary and this was the peaceful setting for a unique event in the history of our ecumenical faith communities.

It was here that 26 young people from around the globe came together to learn, discuss and search for meaning about a current world wide health epidemic, AIDS. Over the course of the 7 days together, we, the youth of our different global communities, shared stories, cultural songs and jokes, played games and spent beautiful evenings under the African skies breaking barriers of language, colour, cultural backgrounds and even sexual orientation. We spent valuable hours discussing and formulating ACTION for our work and participation in our local communities as youth workers and leaders in the specific area of HIV/AIDS care and education.

During our time together we not only discovered some of the real difficulties of coming together from all corners of the globe, but discovered and tried realistically to respond to the many difficulties and issues associated with the whole HUMAN reality of this current world health crisis. We shared our experiences of being young people from our different church communities and the very real presence of HIV/AIDS in our communities. AIDS has presented many challenges to all church communities around the world and we shared together many of the issues which are difficult for our churches to handle.

AIDS calls for a response from all of humankind, a call to Love, integrity and truth about ourselves as people living together in our different societies. AIDS calls for human and therefore social justice and this can only happen if we all recognise and own the fact that we all live in societies where there is a lot of injustice and oppression. AIDS presents to us all an opportunity to recognise, to name and to own our own behaviours as social beings. It presents to us all a time of change, a time of re-discovery about many social and religious absolutes we have clung to in fear for too long.

AIDS is a chance for real honesty about ourselves as human beings



struggling with issues which intimidate us and cause many to look the other way because it might challenge what we think we know about ourselves and others. AIDS is a time for exploring all human possibilities, joys and sorrows, it is a time for learning through honesty.

The objectives of this unique international workshop, was to bring together the experience, wisdom and the many questions being asked by young people today about HIV/AIDS. It was an event where knowledge, resources and stories of personal involvement were brought together and thrown into an open arena for learning and discussion, so that each of us there could return to our own communities to further help educate and create realistic awareness about a very serious epidemic. Young people are a vital part of the whole network of HIV/AIDS care and education, as well as a vital voice within our churches. WE are also a growing part of the populations dying from this disease.

This conference was an opportunity for young people to represent themselves, their own realities, their own questions. From this perspective, we were able to formulate responses, produced by young people for young people, working towards further networking within our regions. Even though many young people today see themselves as being immune to all our modern dilemmas, such as alcohol, drugs, driving accidents, diseases and even death, we simple are not.

Social, political, economic, religious and personal circumstances all have the potential of putting some of us at risk; just talk with those already infected. The spread of the AIDS virus amongst the youth populations of the world today is real and frighteningly on the increase.

People everywhere need to communicate more, especially within our church communities. All concerns and questions from young people are important, and AIDS has presented to us many areas where our parents, social and religious leaders and educators have failed to do so in an open, honest way. We can and we do, question many of our past and present role models. One of the main areas of concern presented to us today through AIDS, is the apparently overwhelming area of human sexuality. AIDS and sexuality issues are undeniably integrated.

We, the youth, want to talk openly about the fact that we are sexual beings. Many of our elders, including our parents do not talk about sex or sexuality, mainly because they themselves have never experienced open and honest communication about these issues. Too many times the term "Christian" values has been thrown around as some kind of absolute answer to everything, especially with topics which make people feel uncomfortable. There is so much paradoxical and hypocritical evidence around these issues, which is no longer appropriate for young people searching for honesty.

Yes, indeed, there are values and standards which we as young people recognise and own, but we can no longer live under false religious absolutes which have denied many people a sense of belonging, a sense of dignity and a chance to talk about something which is an integral part of our human nature. As soon as we start asking about sex many people start making moral judgements and assuming that just because we want to talk honestly, we want to do it all the time! Sexuality issues are a part of the whole human tragedy of AIDS.

Why all the religious taboo about being honest with the fact that we are all sexual beings? Making religious and moral statements does not promote responsible behaviour —honesty and learning about our real selves does. This narrow minded approach to sex and sexuality has proven to be very unhealthy. We now live in a world where unsafe sexual behaviour can result in death. Sex can mean death, but so can silence.

We also want to be open and honest and look carefully at why many people are still having unsafe, unprotected sex. This is indeed a question which brings social, political, religious, personal and psychological issues to the fore-front.

AIDS presents us with many real questions about power in the world today. Issues about political, religious and personal power. In the context of our Christian traditions, we have all been influenced by religious institutions and their power. Religious absolutes do not promote personal empowerment or personal and sexual integrity, but only serve to disempower people from dealing honestly with their daily realities. Being open and honest in our families and in our church communities about each of our realities is the only way we can hope to be there, with and for each other.

Gender inequality is the root of many of our political, social and religious imbalances and injustices. The disempowerment of women in our global societies in intolerable. AIDS presents us with many issues about who has all the power in the world today. AIDS shows us clearly all kinds of discrimination and human inequality. It truly is a time for learning about ourselves and the way we all live under many oppressive institutions and bureaucracies.

AIDS is indeed a human virus, a human condition which reflects the truthful nature of our global societies, the many imbalances within the way we have structured our societies. It is a part of the whole imbalance of our global environment; it is indeed planetary.

AIDS is an acquired condition, yet as well, just how it is and can be acquired remains a barrier for many people. The way in which

people respond to the many who are infected, is a very relevant issue for us to study.

Our traditional church institutions do not have a perfectly clean reputation in this area. Many people still find the need to label others according to their infective status. It is no wonder that HIV/AIDS is a closed issue for many because it is not OK for people to be infected, especially those who acquired the virus through "undesirable" behaviour.

Are our church leaders willing to be in honest and non-judgemental dialogue? If not, they miss out on the real learning, the growth of spirituality. Nothing is absolute; the possibilities for human nature, of learning and growing together and for healing, are endless.

We certainly don't need permission to explore and to re-create new and exciting and honest theology and sociology. In Matt 17:14-21, Jesus recognises and names the reality of the epileptic child. So too, we must recognise, name and own all the real issues associated with HIV/AIDS.

Pain, suffering, shame, guilt, fear, rejection, confusion, loneliness, sexuality, questions, anger, alienation, silence, abuse, fault, blame, absolutes, differences, body invaders, death, sex, denial, ignorance, prostitution, God, drugs, alcohol, rape, homelessness, poverty, sexual orientation, parents, family, sex roles, female, male, risk.

What a list! These are many of the words which only minimally on paper, represent the real feelings and issues associated with HIV/AIDS, with living and dying.

AIDS requires courage to face new questions about human strengths and weaknesses. It is providing us with the opportunity to ask new questions about how we live together in our global communities, to look at issues of power, oppression, family structures, communication, honesty and most importantly, the values of human life?

How do people in their different cultures come to change risky behaviours and attitudes, which still reflect a lack of knowledge, of human dignity, of self-empowerment and of value of human life.

For example: In many parts of the world today, having sex is the only way to provide for oneself and family. It means the ability to put food on the table. Millions of people are being infected, particularly in our developing nations, because of political and social abominations.

SEX means FOOD, but it can also mean DEATH. What a bizarre paradox.

Condom use and availability was another issue discussed at the workshop. When all is said and done, condoms used properly, can mean safer sex. Condoms are still being denied to many around the world, and yet, in many countries where they are easily available, they are often still not being used... another interesting paradox.

Condoms say ... you have a choice. Condom education does not promote further sexual activity; this is an ignorant myth. Responsible education has to be inclusive, because it promotes honest awareness about choices to be made. We, the youth, want to state clearly that because we want to talk openly and responsibly, this does not mean that it promotes or enhances the possibilities of particular types of behaviour occurring.

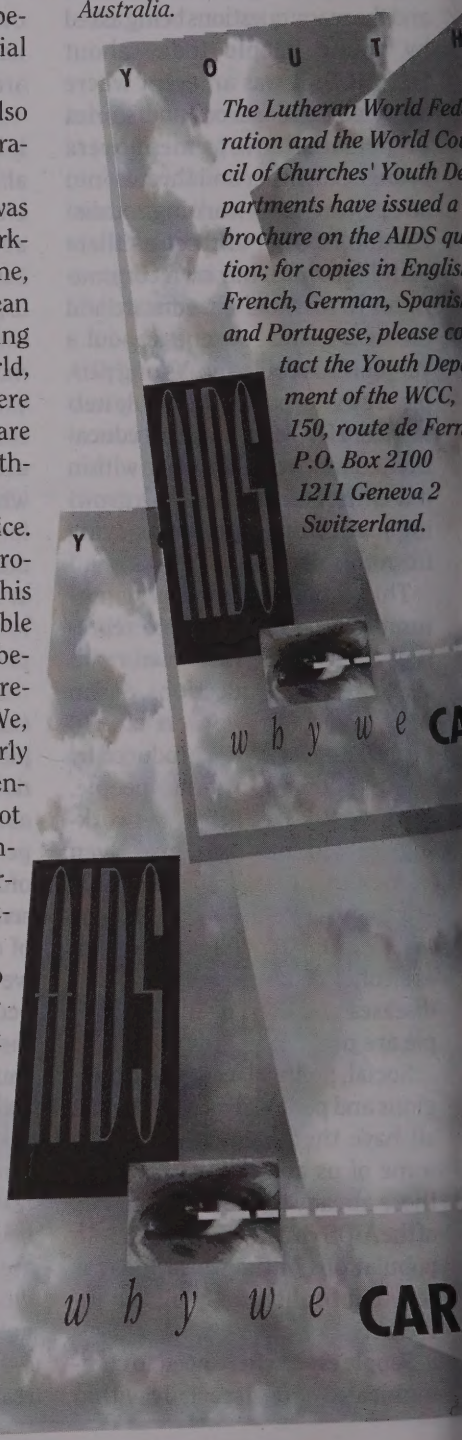
AIDS does not care about who you are and what you say, or about how good you feel about what you say. It does not care about religious absolutes, it does not care about "those who do it, and those who don't". Only people can care. Only people have the strength and the love that it takes to ask the hard questions and to respond.-

In closing this report, I would like to thank all the wonderful young people who came together from around the world to share and learn.

AIDS can stand for:

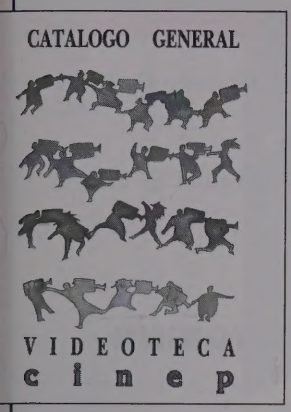
Action
Immediately
Determination
Safe

Peter Fanton was the workshop facilitator, HIV+ representative, Australia.



The Lutheran World Fed ration and the World Co cil of Churches' Youth De partments have issued a brochure on the AIDS qu tion; for copies in Englis French, German, Spanis and Portugese, please co tact the Youth Dep ment of the WCC, 150, route de Ferr P.O. Box 2100 1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

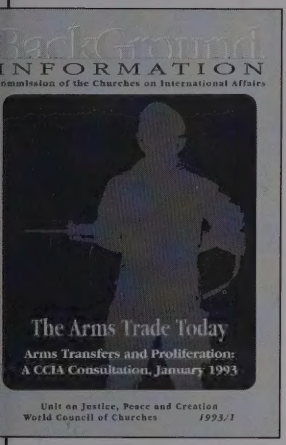


CATALOGO GENERAL VIDEOTECA - CINEP VIDEO CATALOGUE

CINEP (Centro de Investigación y Educación Popular - Centre for Research and Popular Education) has issued a revised version of its video catalogue (in Spanish). They have a large videotheque on a very wide variety of subjects (culture, human rights, development, social movements, economy, etc.), open to all. One can buy or borrow from them. (Videos are mainly in Spanish, but also some in Portuguese, English and French). For information and prices please contact:
CINEP
Carrera 5a. No. 33A-08 A.A. 25916 Santa Fe de Bogotá, D.C. Colombia
Tel: 285 89 77 Fax: 287 90 89

UNIT III NEW PUBLICATIONS

THE ARMS TRADE TODAY



Feeling frustrated about the proliferation of arms transactions? Angry about the apparent lack of political control - or, worse still, the connivance by governments in the arms trade under cover of security concerns or job needs? Short of hard facts? Wondering what your church or congregation should be doing about it? THE ARMS TRADE TODAY, the most recent Background Information produced by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), part of Unit III on Justice, Peace and Creation, will provide plenty of this much-needed information. Not only does it examine the over-all challenge of the arms trade in the 1990s; with the help of regional specialists, it tackles specific problems of different areas, including the burning issues of security, nuclear non-proliferation and military conversion. The former Yugoslavia (the subject of the next Background Information, due out in early 1994), and the role played by the trade in arms in heightening and prolonging the conflict, is the subject of one chapter. A useful bibliography completes the issue. The 200-page booklet, available (in English only) from the CCIA, is based on an international consultation on Arms Transfers in a post-Cold-War World of National and Ethnic Tension, held in Geneva in early 1993. Subsequent meetings of the CCIA Working Group and of the Unit III Commission commended to the WCC member churches guidelines on arms transfers and proliferation, reproduced in the booklet.

In his Foreword to THE ARMS TRADE TODAY, WCC General Secretary Konrad Raiser expresses the hope that "it will prove to be a practical, useful tool in enabling churches to understand better what is at stake. Only then", he concludes, "can we be vocal and effective in challenging the assumption that bigger and better weapons are the most effective way of keeping the peace. The message we continue to proclaim is that justice, peace and the integrity of creation belong together."

ECUMENICAL DECADE OF THE CHURCHES IN SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN

Three new publications related to the Decade have just been published:

° a booklet available in English, German, French and Spanish called The Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women, which is an assessment of the mid-point of the decade and outlines plans for the next five years.

UNIT III PUBLICATIONS

continued from previous page

° *Living Letters* (also in the four languages) outlining a unique programme of visits to churches around the world to mark the mid-point of the Decade.

° Issue no. 13 of the *Decade newsletter Decade Link*.

REPORTS OF ECUMENICAL DELEGATIONS OF THE CCIA

° Ecumenical Delegation to *Equatorial Guinea.*

° Inshalla, Allah isterzé, Astvacz ouzé ... God willing, delegation to *Azerbaijan and Armenia.*

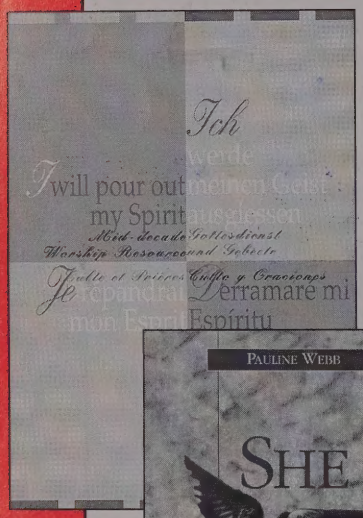
° Restore our Stolen Vote, delegation to *Haiti* (English and French).

° Voices Newly Heard, joint WCC and CEC delegation to the *Baltic States.*

UPDATE ON THE ECUMENICAL MONITORING PROGRAMME TO SOUTH AFRICA

POEMS, PRAYERS AND SONGS, LITURGICAL RESOURCES FOR EGGYS

WCC PUBLICATIONS

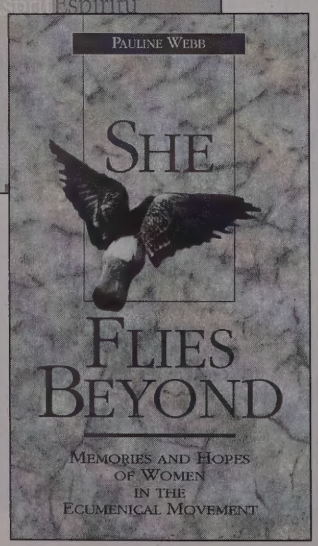
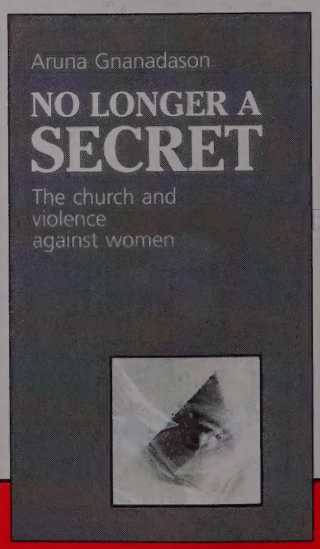
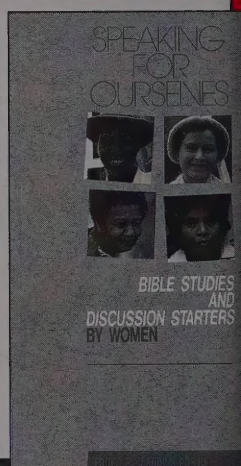
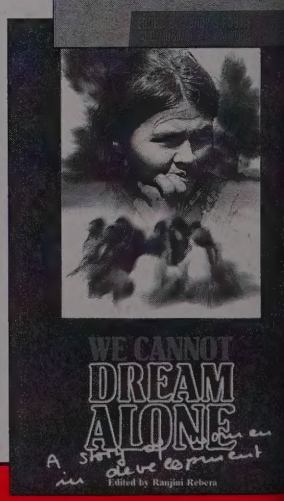


The following publications can be purchased from the **WCC Publications Department**

I Will Pour Out My Spirit, mid-Decade worship resources (four languages in the same volume).

She Flies Beyond, Memories and Hopes of Women in the Ecumenical Movement, by Pauline Webb.

No Longer a Secret - The Church and Violence Against Women, by Aruna Gnanadason.

Speaking for ourselves - bible studies and discussion starters by women, edited by Wendy S. Robins and Musimbi R. A. Kanyoro.

We cannot dream alone - A story of women in development, edited by Ranjini Rebera.